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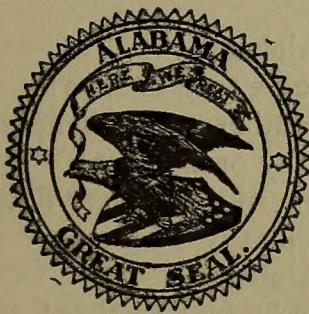
Alabama Bird Day Book



1918

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Alabama Bird Day Book



May the Third
Nineteen Hundred and Eighteen

ISSUED BY
DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH
JOHN H. WALLACE, *Commissioner*
MISS SOPHIA WATTS, *Secretary*

ALABAMA



Alabama, Alabama,
We will aye be true to thee!
From the southern shore where groweth
By the sea thy orange tree
To thy northern vale where floweth,
Deep and blue thy Tennessee
Alabama, Alabama,
We will aye be true to thee!

—*Julia S. Tutwiler.*

FOREWORD



To the Teachers of Alabama:

The conservation of birds is more than a beautiful sentiment; it is a matter of self-defense. Music and the plumage of birds charm us, but their unflagging energies protect in ways that we do not sometimes dream.

In order that our boys and girls may grow up with a just appreciation of our feathered friends, and in order to instil the proper habits of sympathy instead of wantonness, the Department of Game and Fish, of which Hon. John H. Wallace, Jr., is Commissioner, has prepared annually for many years a most excellent Bird Day Book for the use of teachers in the public schools.

In keeping with the spirit of this book and in conformity to law, I am officially designating Friday, May the third, immediately preceding the birthday of John James Audubon, as "Bird Day" in all the public schools of the State. A fitting observance of the day is hereby enjoined and commended.

Very respectfully,

Superintendent.

SUGGESTIVE PROGRAM



(This program may be changed by the teachers to suit themselves.)

Opening song.

Reading: Life of John James Audubon.

Talk by teacher, superintendent or some prominent game protectionist on the subject of the conservation of birds.

Recitation: The Call of Spring.

Reading: How to Go A-Birding.

Paper on the Game Law, or Purple Martin.

Recitation: Spring in the Southland.

Reading: Aesthetic and Sentimental Value of Birds.

Paper on the Bluebird, Carolina Chickadee, or the Sparrow.

Recitation: Ho, for the Road and the Days of June, The Marching of the Legions.

Reading: Wings and No Wings. Value of Birds to Live Stock.

Recitation: The Wood Trails, August Night, The Little Men in Green.

Paper on services of the birds in the orchard.

Recitation: The Mourning Dove, Lady October.

Reading: Putting Up Bird Boxes.

Recitation: The Wind Around the Eaves, The Passing of a Queen.

Reading: The Brown Thrasher, The Birds of Killingsworth.

Closing song.



John J. Audubon

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1780-1851



THE Fourth day of May is the anniversary birthday of John James Audubon, the world's greatest naturalist and bird lover. Although of French lineage, Audubon was born in Louisiana but was educated in France and at the age of eighteen years returned to America. He always had a passionate love for this country. In 1808, he had his residence in Louisville, Kentucky, and when he attended to his business, everything went well, but the feathered choristers of the woods persistently called him and his passion for wild life drew him frequently near to Nature's great throbbing heart.

Leaving Louisville he went to Hendersonville where he became involved in debt. Failing in business, he surrendered everything to his creditors except his gun. He made diligent efforts to strangle his wandering tendencies and earn a support for his family but failed on account of his lack of business capacity. In the meanwhile he had been making original drawings of birds. In 1821, he accepted a position as tutor with a family near New Orleans; and in 1826, the proceeds from a dancing class, amounting to two thousand dollars, enabled him to sail to England with his beloved drawings.

Audubon had never looked into an English grammar and had forgotten most of what he had learned in French and Spanish. He always felt shy in the presence of strangers. He was a man habituated to ramble alone with his thoughts bent on the beauties of nature. Imagine this man seated opposite Prof. Brewton, of Edenborough, and by his puny efforts trying to describe the habits of birds. His pictures were exhibited and he was made a member of

one of the leading scientific societies of England, and best of all, his plans for publication had definite shape.

His book was published in 1838, consisting of four elephant folios containing one thousand and sixty-five life-size portraits of birds in their natural surroundings, which was called "The Birds of America."

He returned to America and spent his remaining days in all climates and in all weather, scorched by burning suns, drenched by piercing rains, frozen by the fiercest cold; now diving into the densest forest, now wandering alone through the most savage regions; in perils, in difficulties, in doubt, with no companion to cheer his life—listening only to the sweet music of the birds, or to the sweeter music of his own thoughts, he faithfully kept his path.

The records of few lives contain nobler examples of strength and endurance and indefatigable energy.



THE CALL OF SPRING



CHILDREN, my children, the spring wakes anew,
And calls through the dawn and the daytime
For flower-like and fleet-footed maidens like you,
To share in the joy of its playtime.

O'er hillside and valley, through garden and grove,
Such exquisite anthems are ringing
Where rapturous bulbul and mina and dove
Their carols of welcome are singing.

I know where the ivory lilies unfold
In brooklets half-hidden in sedges,
And the air is aglow with the blossoming gold
Of thickets and hollows and hedges.

I know where the dragon-flies glimmer and glide,
And the plumes of wild peacocks are gleaming,
Where the fox and the squirrel and timid fawn hide
And the hawk and the heron lie dreaming.

The earth is ashine like a humming-birds wing,
And the sky like a kingfisher's feather,
O come, let us go and play with the spring
Like glad-hearted children together.

—Sarojini Naidu.

SPRING



THE alder by the river
Shakes out her powdery curls;
The willow buds in silver
For little boys and girls.

The little birds fly over,
And oh, how sweet they sing!
To tell the happy children
That once again 'tis spring.

The gay green grass comes creeping
So soft beneath their feet;
The frogs begin to ripple
A music clear and sweet.

And buttercups are coming,
And scarlet columbine;
And in the sunny meadows
The dandelions shine.

And just as many daisies
As their soft hands can hold
The little ones may gather,
All fair in white and gold.

Here blows the warm red clover,
There peeps the violet blue;
O, happy little children,
God made them all for you!

—Celia Thaxter.

HOW TO GO A-BIRDING



IT HAS seemed to me that, instead of calling on the birds personally, it might be pleasant to tell how to conduct our visits and observations. What is the *modus operandi* of bird study?

We would suggest, first, that one should go a-birding with his heart. Nature requires undivided attention. She can brook no rival if you would win from her the choice secrets of her being. If you give her only half a mind, she will give you but half of her revelation. You must give her your confidence before she will become communicative. Dismiss your ledgers, your politics, your family wrangles, the annoyances of the schoolhouse, from your thought when you go consorting with Nature. You must have a bird in the heart if you would see and appreciate the bird in the bush. It is the heart, too, that sharpens the eyes. Not all persons can become bird students because not all have the requisite enthusiasm; not all are *enrapport*.

Odd as it may appear, I would say, do not be too scientific. Not one word would I utter in disparagement of the specialist and the technical student, providing he feels certain that he can add something new and valuable to science; but for popular amateur bird study I should protest against the slaughter of feathered innocents either for identification or structural research. Do not look upon birds as mere anatomical specimens. You need not kill and dissect birds to know all that is necessary about their structure; for there are many scientific books that will tell you all about their physiology and anatomy.

Study birds as sentient creatures, as interesting individuals, with wonderful instinct and intelligence. The bird anatomist loves science more than he loves birds, or he would never want to kill them and take them apart.

If you really love the birds you will want to study them just as they are in their outdoor haunts, where they obey the impulses of their volatile nature. To do this a good opera glass is a requisite. It partly annihilates distance, and brings the bird up to your eyes. You should get one with a large eye-piece, for with a small one you will find some difficulty in focussing the binocular upon the desired object. Be sure to avoid a glass that has bright colors, which will reflect the gleam of the sun into your eyes. Dark colors are best.

A bird key or manual is indispensable for purposes of identification. Somehow, you cannot enjoy the bird's society until you know its cognomen. A bird's name may even be very inapt, and yet—well, there is something in a name, even if it seems un-Shakespearean to say so. It is a wonderful satisfaction to know that the flitting piece of diminution in yonder tree is a golden-crowned kinglet, and not a warbler or a vireo. I refer to the English names now in vogue among scientific men.

Do you ask when you had better begin the study of birds? Now! In bird study, as in most right pursuits, "now is the accepted time."—*Leander S. Keyser.*



THE RAIN SONG



IT ISN'T raining rain to me,
It's raining daffodils;
In ev'ry dimpling drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills.
A cloud of gray engulfs the day
And overwhelms the town;
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down.

It isn't raining rain to me,
But fields of clover bloom,
Where any buccaneering bee
May find a bed and room.
A health, then, to the happy,
A fig to him who frets;
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining violets.

—*Robert Loveman.*



THE CEDAR WAXWING



A BEAUTIFUL gray-brown bird is he,
With a crest on his velvet head,
Which stands erect when he is surprised,
And is flattened tight in dread;
When contented and happy loose it lies—
As when he is bountifully fed.

His wings and tail are of softest gray
That blend to a darker shade;
On his wings are scarlet wax-like tips
That seem by magic made;
On his breast and the band across his tail
The "Golden Touch" was laid.

He and his roving flock alight
Where berries and seeds they spy;
Well-fed, they perch on a bough of a tree
In a row, remote and shy;
They preen their coats, and whisper and lisp,
And then away they fly.

—A. E. B.



CEDAR WAXWINGS



THE presence of certain horny, bright red, wax-like drops on the tips of the feathers of the wings have won for these birds the appropriate name of waxwings. They are small arboreal birds, some six or eight inches in length, with long, pointed wings in which the outer or tenth primary is so much reduced as to be almost imperceptible. The whole plumage is very soft, the prevailing color being a soft fawn-color, changing to ashy on the rump and upper tail-coverts, while the wings are slate. They feed on berries and fruits of various kinds, as well as occasional insects which they capture on the wing after the manner of flycatchers. Their nests, which are rather bulky affairs, are placed in trees and composed of small twigs, rootlets, etc., lined with strips of bark, feathers and other soft materials. The eggs, usually three to five in number, are dull bluish or purplish gray, spotted and dotted with dark brown, black and purplish.

"In clothing the cedar bird Mother Nature essayed her very best and reached the limit of quiet elegance. As if aware of the distinction conferred by its smooth delicately tinted plumage, the waxwing has the air of a well-bred aristocrat, and comports itself with a dignity that is very impressive. Why this beautiful creature should be denied a voice is a mystery but, with the exception of the faintest kind of a whistle and a few low notes, seldom heard, the bird is silent. But its beauty and the good it does should insure its careful protection.

"Except during the nesting season, which is very late, the bird is a wanderer, moving about the country in flocks and remaining a shorter or longer time in a given locality according to the abundance of food. The waxwing is a berry eater and its local name of 'cherry bird' indicates that it by no means disdains cultivated varieties. Fortunately the bulk of the fruit it takes consists of wild species, especially in winter, when cedar berries are greedily devoured. In the West it includes in its bill of fare mulberries and pepper berries. While insects constitute only a comparatively small percentage of its diet, those eaten include some very destructive species such as scales and the dreaded elm beetle."—*Farmers' Bulletin*.

AN ODE TO SPRING



IS IT the Spring?
Or are the birds all wrong
That play on flute and viol,
A thousand strong,
The minstrel galleries
Of the long deep wood,
Epiphanies
Of bloom and bud. . . .

And many a silly thing
That hops and cheeps,
And perks his tiny tail,
And sidelong peeps,
And flitters little wing,
Seems in his consequential way
To tell of Spring.

The river warbles soft and runs
With fuller curve and sleeker line,
Though all the winter-blackened hedge
Twigs of unbudding iron shine,
And trampled still the riversedge.

And O the sun!
I have no friend as generous as this sun
That comes to meet me with his big warm hands.
And O the sky! . . .
As the pure kiss of greening willow stands
Against the intense pale blue
Of this sweet boundless overarching waste.

—Richard Le Gallienne.

THE SPARROW



SPARROW, the gun is levell'd, quit that wall.
—Without the will of heaven I cannot fall.

THERE are some forty species of sparrows in North America which are helpful rather than harmful and should be encouraged rather than discouraged; at least, this is the opinion of the United States department of agriculture's investigator. While the English sparrow is noisy and obtrusive, the American species are unobtrusive both in song and action.

These native sparrows, although so seldom noticed by the majority of people, may probably be found in nearly every part of our country, although not more than a half dozen forms are generally known in any one locality. While American sparrows are noted seed eaters, they do not by any means confine themselves to a vegetable diet. During the summer, and especially in the breeding season, they eat many insects and feed their young largely upon the same food. Examination of stomachs of three species—the song sparrow, chipping sparrow, and field sparrow shows that about one-third of the food consists of insects, comprising many injurious beetles, as snout beetles or weevils, and leaf beetles. Many grasshoppers are eaten.

In case of the chipping sparrow, these insects form one-eighth of the food. Grasshoppers would seem to be rather large morsels, but the bird probably confines itself to the smaller species; indeed, the greatest amount (over 36 per cent) is eaten in June, when the larger species are still young and the smaller most numerous. Besides the insects already mentioned, many wasps and bugs are taken. As a whole, the insect diet of the native sparrows may be considered beneficial. There are several records of potato bug larvæ eaten by chipping sparrows.

Their vegetable food is limited almost exclusively to hard seeds. This might seem to indicate that the birds feed to some extent upon grain, but the stomachs examined show only one kind, oats, and but little of that. The great bulk of the food is made up of grass and weed seed, which form almost the entire diet during winter, and the amount consumed is immense.



FIELD SPARROW.
 $\frac{1}{8}$ Life-size.

In the agricultural regions of the upper Mississippi valley by roadsides, on borders of cultivated fields, or in abandoned fields, wherever they can obtain a foothold, masses of rank weeds spring up and often form almost impenetrable thickets which afford food and shelter for immense numbers of birds and enable them to withstand great cold. A person visiting one of these weed patches on a sunny morning in January, when the thermometer is 20 degrees or more below zero, will be struck with the life and animation of the busy little inhabitants. Instead of sitting forlorn and half frozen, they may be seen flitting from branch to branch, twittering and fluttering, and showing every evidence of enjoyment and perfect comfort. If one of them is captured it will be found in excellent condition; in fact, a veritable ball of fat.

The snowbird and tree sparrow are perhaps the most numerous of all the winter sparrows. Examination of many stomachs shows that in winter the tree sparrow feeds entirely upon seeds of weeds. Probably each bird consumes about one-fourth of an ounce a day.

The writer of the new bulletin has estimated the amount of weed seed annually destroyed by these birds in Iowa. On the basis of one-fourth of an ounce of seed eaten daily by each bird, and an average of ten birds to each square mile, remaining in their winter range of 200 days, there would be a total of 1,750,000 pounds, or 875 tons of weed seed consumed in a single season by this one species. Large as are these figures, they unquestionably fall far short of the reality.

The estimate of ten birds to a square mile is very conservative, for in Massachusetts, where the food supply is less than in the western states, the tree sparrow is even more abundant than this in winter.

In Iowa several thousand tree sparrows have been seen within the space of a few acres. This estimate, moreover, is for a single species, while, as a matter of fact, there are at least a half a dozen birds (not all sparrows) that habitually feed during winter on these seeds.

Farther South the tree sparrow is replaced in winter by the white-throated sparrow, the white-crowned sparrow, the fox-sparrow, the song sparrow, the field sparrow, and several others; so that all over the land a vast number of these seed eaters are at work during the colder months, reducing next year's crop of worse than useless plants.—*Department of Agriculture.*

SPRING IN THE SOUTHLAND



FROM a thicket in the corner of a zigzag fence,
Where the succulent pokeberry stalks uprear,
With sassafras and sumac in a wild growth dense,
The blackberry blossoms thro' the brown rails peer;
With dewdrops shining on their long white sprays,
Where the yellow bee buzzes and the red bird flies,
They marvel at the world and its new found ways,
With innocent wonder in their wild, sweet eyes.

Magnolias are white,
And roses are bright,
And many there be that love them,
But with dewsprinkled faces,
And wild wood graces,
Oh, the blackberry blooms are above them.

Where the pine boughs are swinging, in the soft May breeze,
And bumble bees are boasting of their spring tide gain,
And the mocking bird is singing out his happiest glees,
To the cotton-tailed rabbit in the bend of the lane;
They lean their faces on the moss-grown rails,
And listen to the melody the mocking bird weaves;
While the lizards go a-darting with their trembling tails,
Like slim long shutters through the last year's leaves.

Chrysanthemums are fair,
And orchids are rare,
And many there be that love them,
But with dewsprinkled faces,
And wildwood graces,
Oh, the blackberry blooms are above them.

—Samuel Minturn Peck.

SPRING



SPRING was stirring at the heart of the world, sending new currents of sap into the veins of the trees, new aspirations into dead roots and fibres, fresh hopes of bloom into every sleeping rose. Life incarnate knocked at the wintry tomb; eager, unseen hands were rolling away the stone. The tide of the year was rising, soon to break into the wonder of green boughs and violets, shimmering wings and singing winds.—*A Spinner in the Sun.*



KINGBIRD



"BOLD watchman, you're a noble bird,
For when your war-like heart is stirred
You'll chase the eagle in his flight
'Till he has reached the mountain height."

THE kingbird, or bee-martin, is about eight and a half inches long. It is grayish slate-color, becoming darker on the head and pure white washed with grayish on the breast, the tail being black tipped with white; through the middle of the crown runs a streak of bright orange-red. They are noisy birds, always quarreling about something. These birds are extremely fond of insects, and watch for them from favorite perches. The note is a series of shrill, harsh sounds like "thsee," "thsee." They make their nests of sticks, rootlets, grass, strings, etc., and place it in orchard trees or open woods at any height. Four or five creamy white eggs, specked and spotted with reddish brown, are laid.

LONGINGS FOR SPRING



IF I could come when springtime comes
And breathe the April sky
And see the pageant of the flowers
In purple bloom go by;
If I could come when robin wakes
And lie upon the hill,
And watch the gradual green return,
And hear the tinkling rill!

If I could come when springtime comes
And feel its sun and rain,
And see the old, divine event
Of life renewed again;
If I could come a little while
Each year through all the years,
Why, then, I would not strive with death
And would not think of tears!

If I could come when springtime comes
And watch its violet birth,
And see the little green fields run
Together round the earth;
And hear the mating songs once more,
The heart-beat of the lark,
I would not fear the dust of death
Nor dread the utter dark!

If I could come when springtime comes
And drink its beauty down,
And see its little blooms creep up
To take the noisy town;
Oh, I would lie and never wake
Through all that other time,
With folded hands and marble flesh
And lips devoid of rhyme!

If I could come when springtime comes
And on my brow its breath,
Oh, well-a-day the dreamless years
In quiet halls of death!
If I could drink of the ruby wine,
And watch the blooms again,
And hear the birds, and see the leaves,
And feel the April rain!

—*Exchange.*



THE AESTHETIC AND SENTIMENTAL VALUE OF BIRDS



OMITTING all mention of various other material benefits which birds confer on man, I will notice briefly their æsthetic and sentimental values.

Bird life is the part of the creation in which nature has done more in the way of bestowing mental benefactions on man than in any other of her works. Unconsciously received, yet born of it, there is a spiritual teaching, an uplifting influence, in the study of birds which tends to make a man act more constantly from principle, which tends to give a new and a more wholesome tone to his whole life.

The companionship of birds affords a happiness as pure, perhaps, and as permanently exquisite as a man in his present state of being can possibly enjoy. Never came purer joy into my life than when, rising at dawn from my couch of fern, I heard the approach of the coming day heralded by a chorus of glad bird voices. Never have I experienced emotions which have so lastingly impressed my mind as when, in the inexpressible mystery of the darkened forest, with the stars drifting over, I listened to the sublime notes of some feathered psalmist, itself in night invisible.

The world itself is but an outline sketch; it is the birds which fill in the details and complete the picture. Towered vapors of the

summer firmament hang on the wall of the sky against a setting of immutable blue; the trees are motionless; the glassy waters of the lake too idle to curve and break upon the shore. Nothing speaks of life or action. Suddenly, hitherto unseen in leafy tracery, a bird rushes out and up into the air, telling the sunshine all its joy. One can almost hear the mechanism start. The world begins to live and move. What artist is there who does not know this? Even when painting either of the two most majestic scenes on the earth—the ocean or the Himalayas—he adds this stimulating power to his canvas.

To turn from the palette to the pen, what poet is there who has not been inspired by birds? From the background of my memory a thousand instances of such inspiration come leaping forth. Shelley, Coleridge, and Longfellow, to mention three only of our singers, have been each rendered immortal in virtue of the power exerted on their minds by the bird. "To a Skylark," "The Ancient Mariner," and "The Birds of Killingsworth" are poems that are imperishable.

The Mexicans felt the poetry when they looked upon the humming-birds as emblems of the soul, as the Greeks regarded the butterfly, and held that the spirits of their warriors who had died in the defense of their religion were transformed into these exquisite creatures in the mansion of the sun.

Earth holds no joy to the eye more sweet than the sight of one of these living gems as it flits to and fro with the shrillest vibration of swiftly beating wings, hovers for an instant in the shade of a pendulous blossom, shoots out again into the sunshine, darts away after an insect, wheels round and round in sheer exuberance of spirit, returns to sip at the nectared cup, then flashes up again, glittering with all the colors of the prism, into its home in the air.

Was all this beauty for no purpose but for the gratification of a passing fashion? Is man constitutionally unable to realize that in the beauty of these feathered jewels there is a value greater than the value that is entered in a ledger? Children gather flowers of the field, and, presently, their fleeting fancy sated, toss them aside to wither and die. But the seeds, the roots, remain. The daisy will bloom another year; the cowslip will stain the meadows yellow as of yore; but these blossoms of the air will never bloom again. Once gone, they are gone forever.—*James Buckland.*

MEADOWLARKS



THY notes are silenced, and thy plumage mew'd;
Say, drooping minstrel, both shall be renew'd.
—Voice will return—I cannot choose but sing;
Yet liberty alone can plume my wing;
Oh, give me that!—I will not, cannot fly
Within a cage less ample than the sky;
Then shalt thou hear, as if an angel sing,
Unseen in air, heaven's music from my tongue;
Oh! give me that!—I cannot rest at ease
On meaner perches than the forest trees;
There, in thy walk, while evening shadows roll,
My song shall melt into thine inmost soul;
But, till thou let thy captive bird depart,
The sweetness of my strain shall wring thy heart.

LENGTH, about $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Range: Breed generally in the United States, southern Canada, and Mexico to Costa Rica; winter from the Ohio and Potomac Valleys and British Columbia southward.

Habits and economic status: Our two meadowlarks, though differing much in song, resemble each other closely in plumage and habits. Grassy plains and uplands covered with a thick growth of grass or weeds, with near-by water, furnish the conditions best suited to the meadowlark's taste. The song of the western bird is loud, clear, and melodious. That of its eastern relative is feebler and loses much by comparison. In many localities the meadowlark is classed and shot as a game bird. From the farmer's standpoint this is a mistake, since its value as an insect eater is far greater than as an object of pursuit by the sportsman. Both the boll weevil, the foe of the cotton grower, and the alfalfa weevil are among the beetles it habitually eats. Twenty-five per cent of the diet of this bird is beetles, half of which are predaceous ground beetles, accounted useful insects, and one-fifth are destructive weevils. Caterpillars form 11 per cent of the food and are eaten in every month in the year. Among these are many cutworms and the well-known army worm. Grasshoppers are favorite food and are eaten in every month and almost every day. The vegetable food (24 per cent of the whole) consists of grain and weed seeds.—*Yearbook U. S. Department of Agriculture.*

BUD AND BLOOM



NOW fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares and thick
 By ashen roots and violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drowned in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky soil,
 On winding stream or distant sea.

Where now the seaman pipes, or dives
 In yonder gleaming gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and breed, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my heart
 Spring wakens, too; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*



A LITTLE BIRD TOLD YOU



I SAW a little bird today
 Go winging through the blue,
 And by that little bird I sent
 A kindly thought to you.
 So, if you feel the friendliness
 Of an absent one enfold you,
 Just smile and say it's something that
 A little bird has told you.

MY LADY APRIL



WHEN down the stair at morning
The sunbeams round her float,
Sweet rivulets of laughter
Are bubbling in her throat;
The gladness of her greeting
Is gold without alloy;
And in the morning sunlight
I think her name is Joy.

When in the evening twilight
The quiet book-room lies,
We read the sad old ballads,
While from her hidden eyes
The tears are falling, falling,
That give her heart relief;
And in the evening twilight,
I think her name is Grief.

My little April lady,
Of sunshine and of showers,
She weaves the old spring magic
And breaks my heart in flowers!
But when her moods are ended,
She nestles like a dove;
Then, by the pain and rapture,
I know her name is Love.

—Henry Van Dyke.

BLUE JAY



THOU hast a crested poll, a scutcheon'd wing,
Fit for a herald of the eagle king,
But such a voice! I would that thou couldst sing.
—My bill has tougher work,—to scream for fright,
And then, when screaming will not do, to bite.



LENGTH, 11½ inches. The brilliant blue of the wings and tail combined with the black crescent of the upper breast and the crested head distinguish this species. Range: Resident in the eastern United States and southern Canada, west to the Dakotas, Colorado, and Texas.

Habits and economic status: The blue jay is of a dual nature. Cautious and silent in the vicinity of its nest, away from it it is bold and noisy. Sly in the commission of mischief, it is ever ready to scream "thief" at the slightest disturbance. As usual in such cases, its remarks are applicable to none more than itself, a fact neighboring nest holders know to their sorrow, for during the breeding season the jay lays heavy toll upon the eggs and young of other birds, and in doing so deprives us of the services of species more beneficial than itself. Approximately three-fourths of the annual food of the blue jay is vegetable matter, the greater part of which is composed of mast, i. e., acorns, chestnuts, beechnuts, and the like. Corn is the principal cultivated crop upon which this bird feeds, but stomach analysis indicates that most of the corn taken is waste grain. Such noxious insects as wood-boring beetles, grasshoppers, eggs of various caterpillars, and scale insects constitute about one-fifth of its food.—*Farmers' Bulletin*.



AMERICAN BLUE-JAY.
3 Life-size

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SWALLOW-TAILED KITE



THE swallow-tailed kite is not only one of the most common birds of prey in the South, but also one of the most beneficial. Its head, neck, and lower parts are white, and its back, wings, and tail, a glossy bluish black. The bird is as much at home in the air as a swift or swallow, usually feeding and drinking without alighting. Its ease and grace of movement always command admiration.

This kite preys upon beetles, wasps, cotton worms, grasshoppers, and dragonflies. It takes also frogs, lizards, and small snakes. The swallow-tailed kite seems to be entirely innocent of preying upon birds or mammals, after the fashion of so many of its raptorial relatives, and on the whole is a species worthy of preservation.—*W. L. M. in Farmers' Bulletin.*



THE PURPLE MARTIN



BIRD beloved by keen-eyed Indians,
"Bird that never rests ;"
Cherished, too, by Southern negroes,
Who provide them nests,
Knowing thus their tiny chickens
Safe from hawks will be ;
Valued, too, by northern farmers,
As crows' enemy.

Martins seek the sheltering houses,
Placed where insects hum
Midst a tangle of sweet blossoms ;
But if sparrows come,
The noisy, selfish, rude intruders
For those homes will fight,
Till the vanquished purple martins
Take a speedy flight.

—A. E. B.

SPRING SIGNS IN SUNNY SOUTH



THE spring is on the way, along the land
The light falls tenderly into the gloom,
And here—here in the dusk close where I stand—
A little bush is lit with jasmine bloom.



THERE are some days that lean from the edge of the winter, and peer on tip-toe into the approaching spring, gathering a softness that at once arouses a sleepy smile in the heart. Such was a recent day when I drove from the city into a neighboring woods. The road was the color of gold, and as smooth. Now and then a cardinal bird made a line of radiance through the gray old trees, whose tops are massed with red berries that look at a distance like brilliant florescence. Most of the birds I saw that day were gray. A sparrow sat so listlessly in a tree-top that he looked like a sort of fungus growth. The mocking-bird on the fence was looking for a worm—not a song. It is yet winter, although the cold days are getting ready to depart.

As I drove under the thick trees, I heard a jay bird singing a song overhead. The jay bird is beautiful and cheerful, and his song suggests industry. It seemed then that the bird was pushing a spirit wheelbarrow through space.

Watery spots lay like scraps of blue sky on the rim of the forest, and the rainy paths were blue. Trees near and far seemed painted with cobalt and gray, while the fields were a harmony of amber and brown. One pale stretch of grass begged for the sunshine. The thick tangle, that in late autumn was an even snow-drift of asters, was everywhere brown along the roadside. All the flakes of this little weed disappeared with the first frost.

Today the sun mantles us with the warmth of spring, and everywhere are signs that the bleak winter days are over.—*Kate Slaughter McKinney, Montgomery, Alabama, in Simmons Magazine.*

APRIL'S GIFT

John Burroughs, Born April 3, 1837



APRIL, the child of sunshine and of rain,
Of the far heaven and of the near, sweet earth,
Calls ever back, after the winter's dearth,
Soft flashing wings to beat the air again,
Pale petaled flowers to star the barren plain,
The maple's rubies,—gems of unpriced worth;
And meet it is that she should bring to birth
A soul to whom earth whispers not in vain;
To him the great rocks and the glaciers hoar
Yield up the past's dim, unremembered hours,
The future speaks through prophesying trees,—
Yet, no less wise in all today's sweet lore,
He reads the secrets of the birds and flowers,
And hears the honied songs of garnering bees.

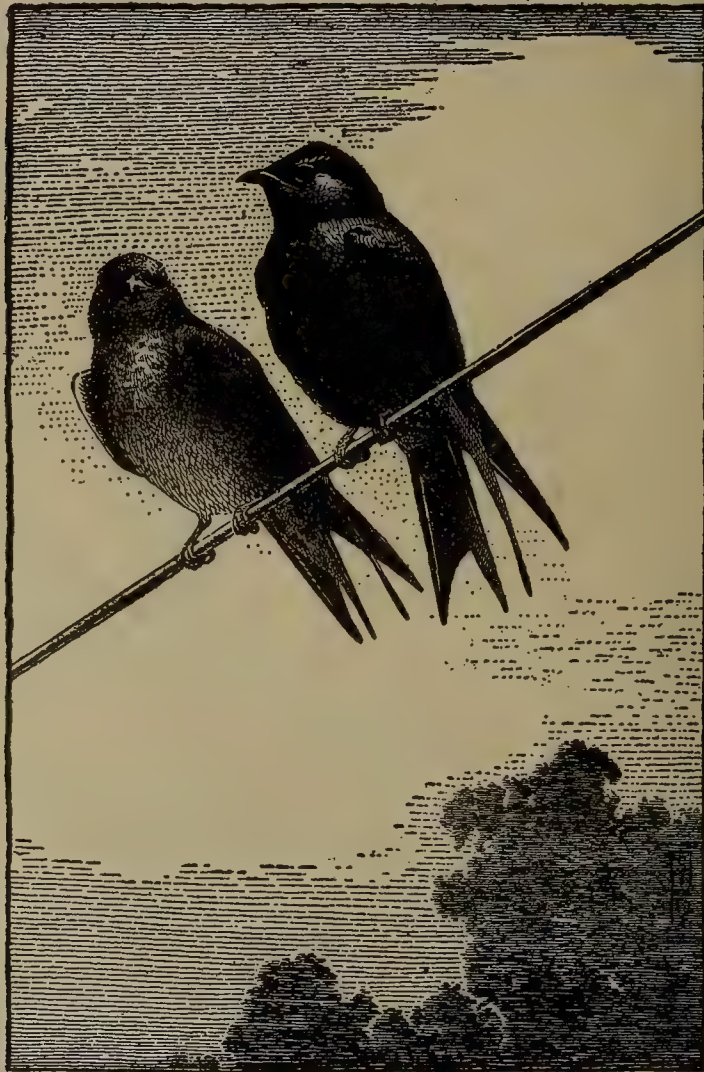
Earth's lowlier creatures play about his feet,—
Why should they fear the presence of a friend?
Eager its little confidence to lend
The chipmunk builds for him its safe retreat;
The nesting bird comes forth, his touch to meet,
From the bloom-laden boughs which o'er him bend;
From far and near, where'er his footsteps wend,
He brings back Nature's message, high and sweet.
Far has he fared: his face is toward the West,
But all the sky is soft with roseate glow,
Upon his pathway lies no cloud of gloom,—
For they who follow on such happy quest
Still hear the bugles of the morning blow,
Within their hearts undying April's bloom.

—Frances Beers.

THE PURPLE MARTIN



THE purple martin and its Pacific coast relative, *progne subis hesperia*, are too well known to need a detailed description. The adult male is a lustrous blue-black, the wings and tail being slightly



PURPLE MARTIN. LENGTH, ABOUT 8 INCHES

duller. The adult female and the young of both sexes are grayish brown, glossed with steel-blue on upper parts, while beneath they are dark gray, shading into whitish on the belly. The size of the

martin is about seven and one-half inches in length, but the great spread of wings, from fifteen to sixteen inches, makes the bird look very much larger than it really is.

During summer the martin is a bird of very wide distribution in temperate North America; in autumn it migrates to the tropics, where it spends the winter. There are eight species of this genus of the swallow family, all of them being confined to America. Before the white man discovered and settled the western world, generations of martins had made their annual journeys from their tropical winter homes to the temperate parts of both continents. Their nesting sites were then in hollow trees or in caves. While forests and rocky retreats have not been entirely abandoned by the martins, yet many of them now breed in homes provided for them by man. The red man, a true lover of nature, invited the cheerful martins to remain about his tepee by erecting a pole on which he hung a hollow gourd, for a nesting place. The white successor of the aborigine has adopted his red brother's bird friend, often providing a far more elaborate home for its use.

Is there anything in the bird world that represents home life and community of interests as well as a colony of martins? Contentment, happiness, prosperity are here, and the cheerful, social twitter of the martins and their industrious habits are a continual sermon from the air to their brothers of the earth. The only note of discord in one of these happy colony houses is from the pugnacious English sparrow, who covets the comfortable homes of the martins and tries to evict the rightful owners and substitute his harsh, disagreeable chatter for their pleasant voices.

The value of the martin to the human race is very great. The birds are so preeminently aerial that their food necessarily consists of flying insects. Among these may be some of the dreaded *Stegomyia*. It is a well-established fact that this and other species of mosquito convey both malarial and yellow fever. Every mosquito, therefore, that is destroyed by a martin, or, in fact, by any bird, lessens so much the chance of the spread of fever plagues. Human lives are sacrificed every year; immense sums of money are expended for investigation and prevention of yellow fever, yet in some localities where this scourge is found the martin is not understood and appreciated as it should be. If one human life is saved each year through the destruction of fever-bearing mosquitoes by the

martins, and other birds, it is a sufficient reason why the lives of these valuable birds should be saved.

Martins are accustomed to gather in large flocks during the latter part of summer for the purpose of roosting in some favored grove. As they journey southward, apparently, these flocks increase in size, and the writer has on several occasions watched the birds coming to their roosts in the evening in astonishing numbers, estimated at 100,000. They seem to prefer a grove, near a human habitation, for their nightly rendezvous. They create no little comment in the neighborhood because of their numbers, and by their continuous chatter and fluttering, particularly during the early part of the night. There is usually little prejudice against them, but not infrequently the people in the neighborhood make excuse that the birds are a nuisance and proceed to shoot into the flocks when they come to roost.—*Wm. Dutcher.*



IN MAY



IN MAY the Irish air is sweet
With odor from the hawthorn spray,
And birds each other blithely greet
In May.

Night holds but momentary sway;
Then vanishes with flying feet
Before the swift approach of Day.

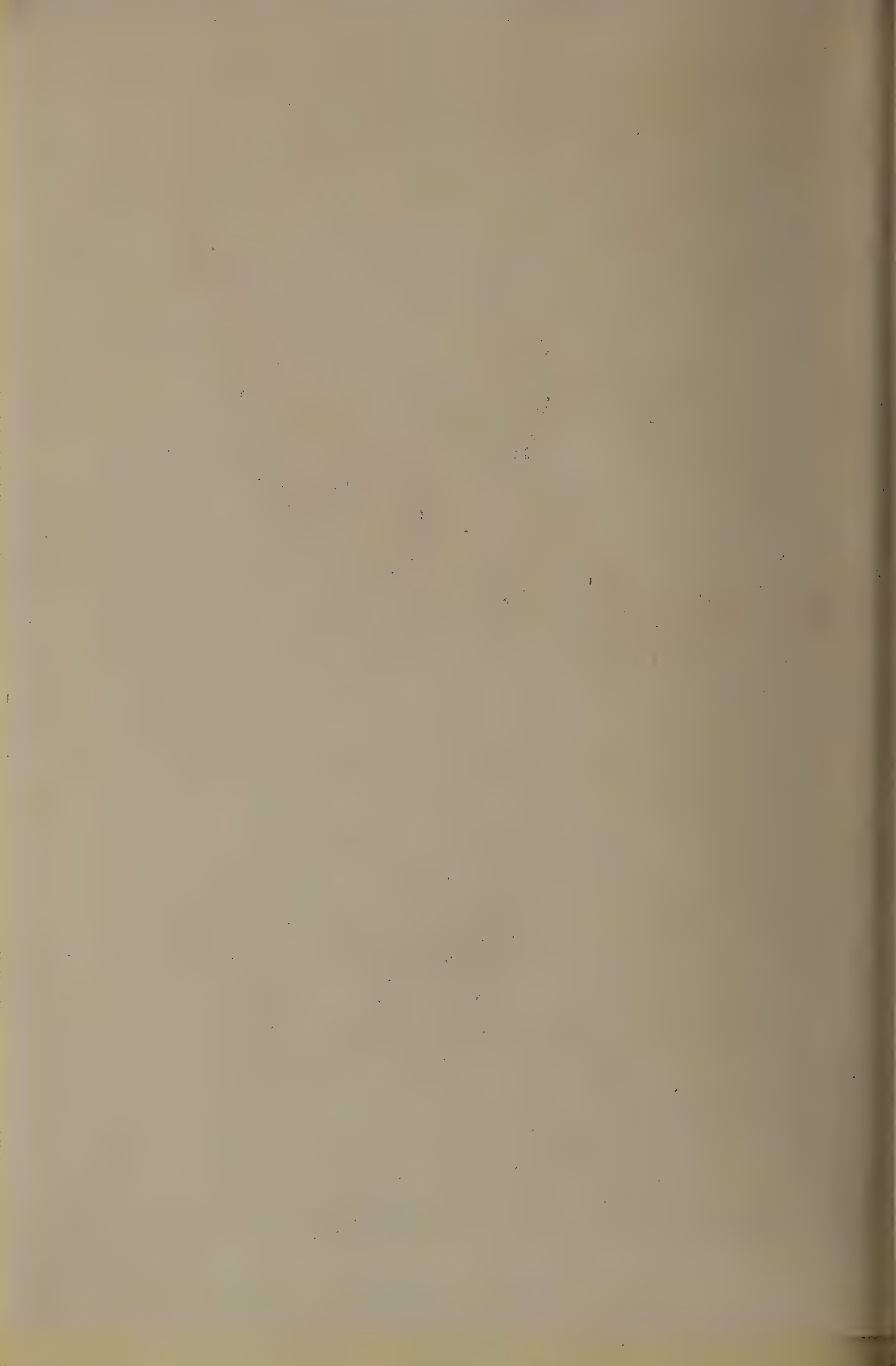
Stags bellow, and the proud rams bleat,
The shining salmon leaps in play ;
While happy lovers often meet
In May.

—Norreys Jephson O'Connor.



CHIMNEY SWIFT.
 $\frac{2}{3}$ Life-size.

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HO FOR THE ROAD AND THE DAYS OF JUNE



OVER the hills and through the plain
The road, like a ribbon of dusty gray,
Winds past fields of budding grain
And meadows sweet with unmown hay;
Like children singing at their play
To the tilt and laugh of a vagrant rune,
These bands of roving gipsies stray—
Ho for the road and the days of June!

The meadowlark, with soft refrain,
Sings in the clover the livelong day,
And the robin-lover chants again
His unforgotten hymn of May;
Against the turquoise sky a spray
Of appleblossoms shines at noon.
Breathing scent too sweet to stay—
Ho for the road and the days of June!

The rover builds his castles in Spain
For none may tell the dreamer nay.
Through shadow, sun, or summer rain
His heart still beats to the gipsy lay.
Oh, Prince of Poverty, show us the way
To find and follow the magic tune;
Give us the charm and teach us to say
Ho for the road and the days in June!



MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT



A WELL-KNOWN species is the Maryland yellow-throat, which frequents bushes and tangles along streams and swamps, and is constantly on the move, giving voice to its continually repeated song of "wichity, wichity, witchity, witch." In coloration they are olive-greenish above, and beneath, at least partly, sometimes wholly, yellow; the forehead and a portion of the sides of the head is black. It builds a bulky nest on or near the ground, generally in a dense tussock of grass, and lays from three to five white, thinly spotted eggs. The Florida yellow-throat is similar but slightly darker and longer-tailed than the Maryland yellow-throat; it occurs in the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast districts. Somewhat larger and with the lower parts more extensively yellow is the otherwise similar Northern yellow-throat.



THE MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT



WHILE May bedecks the naked trees
 With tassels and embroideries,
 And many blue-eyed violets beam
 Along the edges of the stream,
 I hear a voice that seems to say,
 Now near at hand, now far away,
 "Witchery—witchery—witcher."

An incantation so serene,
 So innocent, befits the scene;
 There's magic in that small bird's note—
 See, there he flits—the yellow-throat;
 A living sunbeam, tipped with wings,
 A spark of light that shines and sings
 "Witchery—witchery—witcher."

—Henry Van Dyke.

THE MARCHING LEGIONS



SUMMER is on her way,
July has come and gone;
No one remembers May,
August is marching on;
Softly the South wind blows,
Yet, but a dream and then
Deep in the drifting snows
We shall be cast again.

Where are the songs of Spring
Sung from the April larch?
Where is the roistering
Of the winds of March?
Where is the light of June
Crowning her crimson throne?
Gone as a passing tune.

Mad youth is on its way,
Childhood has come and gone;
Dim is the distant day
Boyhood was marching on;
Life now is lilting rhyme,
Yet, but a step and then
Gray with the snow of time
Life turns to prose again.

Where are the songs of Youth
Sung where the breakers foam?
Where is the old time truth
Taught at the hearth of home?
Where are the loves we've known
In the red deeps of June?
Gone as a breath is blown—
Gone as a passing tune.

—Grantland Rice.

CHIMNEY SWIFT



WHY ever on the wing, or perch'd elate?
—Because I fell not from my first estate;
This is my charter for the boundless skies,
"Stoop not to earth, on pain no more to rise."

UNUSED chimneys of old dwellings make favorite roosting and nesting places for these smoke-colored birds. They originally lived in hollow trees until the advent of man furnished more convenient places. Spines on the end of each tail feather enable them to hang to their upright walls, and slowly to hitch their way to the outer world. Throughout the day numbers of them are scouring the air for their fare of insects, but as night approaches they return to the chimney. The note is a continuous and not unmusical twittering uttered while on the wing and also within the depths of the chimney. The nest is made of small sticks or twigs glued to the sides of a chimney and each other by the birds' saliva. The three to five white eggs are long and narrow.



SCARLET TANAGER



THE scarlet tanager is scarlet entirely, except the wings and tail; the female is greenish-yellow and blackish. These beautiful birds are found in open woods, but they often come out in fields, parks, orchards and in yards when feeding. Besides berries and seeds, they live upon quantities of insects, frequently catching them on the wing in true flycatcher style. The song resembles that of the robin, but is harsher, less varied and higher pitched. They make their nests loosely of twigs and rootlets, on lower branches of trees; the eggs are four in number, and are pale bluish-green, spotted with brown.



SCARLET TANAGER.
Life-size.

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THE SCARLET TANAGER



WHY seems the world so fair today?
 I sought the magic wood,
 Where stately trees in fresh array
 And silent beauty stood.

And lo! within a dim, green bower
 A brilliant blossom hung.
 But, suddenly, my scarlet flower
 Jet wings to the breezes flung!

To his olive mate he called, "Ship-chur!"
 And he sang to her, hidden away,
 The robin-like song of the tanager,
 A rhythmical roundelay.

—A. E. B.



TO A RED BIRD



THOU merry-hearted sorcerer of song!
 Why hide there in the summer of the tree?
 Come down, and let me bind you with the throng
 Of poppies proud, surcharged with envying thee.
 Oh! would that I, like you, could rise and float,
 Bestirred with glowing cinders haply thrown
 Into your singing. Is your ruddy note
 A spark old Vulcan, cursing, died to own?
 Or did a ruby, crazed with long unrest,
 Escape from crown and king for you? Why start,—
 Ah! did you think the secret never guessed
 Till now, so rapturous living in your heart,
 Could fall my own, forsooth, and be for long
 Untold, when I kneel only to your song?

Kate Slaughter McKinney.

WINGS AND NO WINGS

(Mother's Story)



INTRODUCTION

“DO YOU like Maisie, Agatha?” asked Mrs. Drew of her little girl just home from school one afternoon. “You used to walk home with Katie Fay, but now you seem always to wish to be with Maisie, and Katie comes home alone.”

“O mother, I’m just *crazy* about her!” declared Agatha. “She’s so interesting! She’s been to so many places, and she knows how to do such a lot of things! Tomorrow noon she has promised to teach me a new dance she learned in town, and she told me all about a picture show coming home this afternoon. It was terribly exciting! I wish I could go sometimes!”

Mrs. Drew opened her lips quickly as if to speak, then thought better of it, and said nothing for a moment or so. Finally she remarked: “You haven’t known her very long, have you?”

“No, mother, but she is so much fun, and I do get awfully tired of trying to be just perfect, and speak just so, and get every lesson exactly right, like Katie. Maisie is more comfortable than Katie, and we get along well enough at school without being so particular.”

Agatha spoke in a rather petulant and defensive tone. She felt that neither she nor Maisie had her mother’s approval, and she was not really happy about it.

But her mother was a wise woman. “Come, sit down here beside me, little-girl-who-doesn’t-see-straight,” she said, with a smile. “I will treat you as if I were an ancient philosopher and you were my disciple. I will tell you a story, and it is called ‘Wings and No Wings.’”

I. WINGS.

“Away up among the thick branches of the big maple tree in the lane was once the cozy home of a gray squirrel family. Five babies there were, all lively and active, finding the summer days almost too short for their merry business of frolicking and of learning all the wise squirrel ways of their father and mother. Some-

times the friskiest one would start a game of tag. Immediately all five would be whisking up and down the trees, jumping from branch to branch, darting over the grass as light as thistledown. Again, the two biggest brothers would have a mock quarrel, chasing each other and scolding noisily—‘Chip, chip, chip, chip!’—until they tired of that and went to gathering beechnuts or acorns.

“They were all inquisitive, as squirrels are apt to be, and very much interested in other people’s affairs. They liked to tease, too, now and then, though, on the whole, the five were good friends with nearly every one. They had many neighbors in the lane and in the fields and woods beyond. In their own tree there was a bluejay family, while in a hollow at the foot some rabbits had their home. Woodpeckers, bluebirds, and thrushes were all about. Over in the field meadow larks built their nests, and many other furry creatures besides themselves lived near by.

“The youngest squirrel, however, had a great and curious admiration for his bird neighbors. He would leave the jolliest game of tag to talk to the bluejay or the robin, and he never tired of asking questions about wings and flying. ‘How does it feel to go so fast and far through the air?’ he asked the robin one morning. ‘Do you never fall or forget how to do it?’

“‘Goodness, no!’ answered the robin. ‘It’s just as easy as eating cherries. Why, if you had any wings to spread, you could fly! You do pretty well, anyway, for a four-legged creature, with that tail of yours. It’s almost feathery, indeed!’

“The squirrel was very much pleased at this. He made up his mind that he would jump just as far as he could. Really, once, when the wind was helping him, he made a longer leap than his biggest brother ever had dared. Still, it was not flying, and the youngest squirrel was not satisfied.

“One day he interviewed a swallow, who had a nest under the eaves of a barn. ‘O, it is the finest thing in the world!’ cried the swallow. ‘There is nothing so delightful as flying! It is no wonder that even a squirrel should wish to do it. Perhaps, since you are small and light, if you spread your legs out as flat as possible, you might do better. They would be a little like wings. But you really need feathers,’ she concluded; ‘feathers were made for flying.’

“The little squirrel thanked her and tried faithfully to follow her suggestion. He found that it did indeed help. ‘Surely,’ he thought, ‘with practice I can make a flying leap from our tree to

the oak away over there—farther than any squirrel has ever tried to leap.'

"The rest of the family teased him dreadfully.

" 'Do!' cried one of his brothers. 'He is so little and good-for-nothing he thinks the wind will blow him along!'"

"His mother fretted over his daring attempts and scolded him, though to no purpose. 'You will certainly be killed!' she told him. 'Stop copying those silly birds! Play with your own kind and help gather acorns for the winter! There will be few birds to play with then, and fur is better than feathers for cold weather.'

"The little squirrel did help with the acorns, but he would not stop trying to fly. He loved the birds, and he spent so much time with them that he grew happier and more joyous than before. He loved to listen to the robin's evening song, and when the cardinal and the oriole made the lane ring with their clear whistled notes he thought of many lovely things and was glad to live in such a beautiful world.

"All the birds were fond of him. They helped and encouraged him always, and when the bluebird left with the others for the South he said to the youngest squirrel: 'Who tries his best to fly may find his wings, little friend!'"

"The squirrel thought of that often during the long winter and never ceased to try. By and by he felt that he was improving a good deal. At last, one day in early March, he made a wonderful leap from the old maple and landed quite easily on the distant oak. How delightful it was! He was so happy he wished he could sing, and then, to his great surprise, he heard from the fence along the lane the lovely spring song of his friend, the bluebird. He made another splendid leap and reached the fence-rail to welcome the returning traveler.

" 'O little squirrel!' cried the bluebird. 'What did I tell you? You have tried your best, and you have found your wings!'"

"It was true, for the squirrel learned in that second leap what had helped him to fly, if not quite like a bird, at least as no other squirrel had dared to hope. Between his body and his strong little legs the skin had grown in wide, loose folds, and when he flattened himself for a leap they really made a sort of wings.

"What a joyful little squirrel he was! He never tired of trying his new-found power, and when he chose a little gray mate, and

they had five baby squirrels to care for, he taught them all to fly as he did.

"Ever since then that branch of the squirrel family has been known as 'flying squirrels,' because one little gray squirrel longed with all his heart to be like his swift-winged soaring neighbor."

II. NO WINGS

"Don't be afraid," said Mother Brown Bird to her five timid nestlings huddled together on the oak-tree branch. "Spread your wings just as I do, and they will carry you safe to this lower bough. It is only a little way. See how easy it is!" And she flew up beside them, and then down again, while Father Brown Bird darted back and forth, calling encouragingly and sometimes impatiently.

"It looks so delightful!" sighed one little bird. "But how terrible it would be to fall down on the hard ground! Why, we might be killed!"

"Who cares for a fall?" chirped the boldest and most reckless one. "I am sure I can reach that branch, and I shall not wait any longer. I want to fly!" So he spread his wings and plunged off.

"The others twittered in alarm, but their reckless brother landed quite safe and triumphant beside Mother Brown Bird, much praised by his parents, though a trifle breathless and dizzy.

"Two of the others who had been balancing and fluttering their wings now followed him. One was unlucky and fell to the ground beneath, but father and mother bird flew quickly to him and with many encouraging words persuaded him to try again. Soon he was up in the tree again, quite proud because he had learned to fly up as well as down.

"Even the timid little sister took courage after that and was surprised to find the air like friendly arms under her outspread wings.

"Left upon the home branch by the nest was just one brown birdling. Mother and father bird called and coaxed, brothers and sisters dared longer and longer flights, but he would not make an effort. 'I do not want to fly,' he declared. 'I am afraid of the air. I like this branch, and it is too dangerous to trust to feeble wings.'

"At last, when Mother Brown Bird was quite out of patience, she flew up and gave her stubborn son a push which sent him from his perch. She hoped he would spread his wings to keep himself

from falling and find out how easily they would bear him up, as many a fearful baby bird has done. This foolish fellow, however, would not try at all and fell plump into the grass below. His anxious parents flew about, both scolding and coaxing, but it was useless; their obstinate nestling refused to move. 'No, I do not want to fly,' he said. 'I do not want to be up high for fear I may fall again. It is safe and comfortable in this soft grass. I mean to stay here. My two legs are better than wings.'

"So, since they could do nothing more, the other birds left him and spent the summer day singing in the trees, trying their young wings, or seeking for food in the pleasant woodland.

"The little brown bird hopped about, thinking how safe he was and how sensible to stay upon the solid earth. He was rather lonely, for the ground-folk were too busy to pay any attention to him, and his kindred of the air were high above him. There was plenty to eat and drink, however. He found many insects in the grass and even a few ripe berries, while a tiny rill was not far away. Once he was terribly frightened. There was a sudden sharp yelping close at hand, a sound of something running nearer and nearer, and then a boy and a dog raced past him in pursuit of a frightened rabbit. The little brown bird half raised his untried wings, and a fleeting thought of the safety of far treetops came to him, but he hid himself under a thick bush until all was quiet again. Another time he left the shelter of the wood to wander in a sunny meadow. He was quite happy there until he happened to see a dark shape soaring above and remembered what his mother had said in the nest about hawks. Trembling with fear, he crept under the edge of a big rock and kept as still as the rock itself until the hovering shadow was gone. When evening came, he did not know what to do. He felt pretty lonesome, too, but he found a thicket of close-growing bushes and snuggled as far in among them as he could to keep out of the way of hungry owls or other enemies.

"I cannot tell you all his adventures, but the summer passed day by day, while the little brown bird learned to live as the other ground people did.

"When autumn came, the other birds flew away to warmer climates, while he, who had no power of airy flight, stayed to learn the dangers and hardships of winter. It was difficult to keep alive then, but at last spring came, and summer followed—then other springs and other summers. Sometimes when he heard the sweet

songs of other birds in the treetops he wished to sing too. But in some strange way the song he felt he could have sung seemed to belong with soaring wings, with swaying boughs, with whispering green leaves, and he could not imitate their liquid notes. Sometimes when he saw the lark soar into the far blue sky he felt a stir of longing for something beautiful he had missed. But he contented himself among the slower folk upon the ground, and when one day he came upon a quiet little gray bird whose wing was too crippled ever to bear her aloft again, he persuaded her to help him build a nest in a sheltered hollow. Soon they were very busy providing for a brood of little birds. None of their children ever thought of flying; they used their wings only to help them run or to beat off an enemy. So at last the wonderful heritage of flight and song disappeared. All the descendants of the little brown bird who would not use his wings had their dwelling upon the ground, and their only song was a chirp or a twitter—never the sweet, joyous carol of the sky lovers."

"The tale is done, O little disciple," said Mrs. Drew with a kiss. "Now put on your hat and weed your beloved pansy bed while you think it over. Before you go to bed maybe we'll have a little talk about it."

Agatha said nothing at all, but she kissed her mother and went off to the pansy bed with a very thoughtful face.—*Edith Childs Battle*.



MOCKINGBIRD



THE general colors of the mockingbird are gray and white; the bases of the primaries and outer tail feathers are white. The nest of these birds is variously situated, in small trees, brush heaps, briars, etc. The nesting material consists of twigs, plant stems, grasses, strings, strips of bark, feathers, and pieces of paper. The eggs have a pale greenish blue ground-color, and are rather heavily colored with reddish brown spots. Four is the number generally laid in a nest. The one profession of the male in spring is singing, and so completely does this engross his mind that to his mate is left the entire responsibility of constructing their habitation and hatching the eggs. The bird's appetite for fruit and berries in some communities becomes at times so marked that many fruit growers complain of their depredations, while others plant more fruit in order to provide enough for both man and bird.

The mockingbird is an insectivorous bird and is undoubtedly the sweetest songster of the North American continent, its notes of liquid melody eclipsing those of the world-famed nightingale.



THE LESSON TAUGHT BY THE MOCKINGBIRD



WHEN the shadows of the evening
 Creep across the grassy wold
 Blithely singing near my dwelling
 Comes a saucy songster bold.

Gay and plaintive are the carols
 That he sings in matchless strain
 And perforce my smile enkindles
 For he sings my own refrains.

List'ning to his mockings artless
 Deeply is this lesson taught:
 By our every act an impress
 On some other life is wrought.
 —Lillian Finnell, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

CAROLINA CHICKADEE



THE Carolina chickadee ranges through the southern portion of the United States from the Atlantic to the Rockies and north to the Ohio River and to some extent beyond. Its nest is built in hollow trees or posts, or in boxes set up for its special accommodation. A bird of forests and groves, it is not found on treeless areas, and does not often alight upon the ground. From this it follows that its food is mostly of the kind that can be taken on trees or bushes, and, therefore, excludes such ground-inhabiting insects as ants and grasshoppers.

The study of the food habits of the Carolina chickadee is based upon an examination of the contents of 210 stomachs collected in the Southeastern States. The food consisted of 71.94 per cent animal matter and 28.06 per cent vegetable, the former being made up of insects and spiders with a few sowbugs, found in one stomach, and the latter of berries and several kinds of seeds.

Beetles, being rather terrestrial in habit, escape the chickadees to some extent, forming only 3.67 per cent of their food. Nearly half of these were snout beetles, or weevils, of which practically all species are more or less harmful and many are pests. The predacious ground beetles apparently elude these birds completely, for not a trace of one was found in any of the 210 stomachs.

A few ants were taken in the months from February to June, except May, but the average for the year is only 0.36 per cent. Bees and wasps (4.48 per cent of the food of the year) were taken oftener and more regularly. The month of greatest consumption was February, which would appear to be rather early for bees and wasps to be out extensively, and March stands next.

Bugs seem to be a favorite food in the four months from April to July, during which the great bulk is eaten. The average for these months is 15.13 per cent, but for the whole year it is only 5.68 per cent, as bugs were eaten in only three of the other eight months and then but sparingly. This item of food is made up of stink-bugs, shield bugs, leafhoppers, tree-hoppers, plant lice, and scales.

While no special pest was noted, nearly all of these are harmful and especially the last two, of which there are hundreds of species and nearly every plant has its own peculiar form.

The real food of the Carolina chickadee consists of moths and caterpillars. Moths were found in only 1 stomach, their pupæ in 16, their eggs in 20, and their larvæ (caterpillars) in 138, or about two-thirds of those examined. The month of greatest consumption is October, when they amount to more than three-fourths of the food (78.1 per cent). The month of least consumption is December, when they still aggregate more than a tenth of the yearly food (11.74 per cent). The average for the year (44.42 per cent) is exceeded by cuckoos, but by few if any other birds. Chickadees have a habit of beating their prey to pieces on a branch of a tree before swallowing it, so that the stomachs contain only fragments not easy to identify. It is probable that in these were many notorious pests, for the pupæ of codling moths were recognized in five stomachs and the eggs that produce one of the tent caterpillars in two.

Like many other tree-inhabiting species, the Carolina chickadee eats very few grasshoppers, but some were taken irregularly through the year (1.04 per cent). In five months, including August, the grasshopper month, none were eaten at all, and but few at other times. So far as stomach records show no genuine grasshoppers were eaten, but only some of their allies in their lowest or first stage, viz, the egg. In 11 stomachs were found the eggs of katydids; in 5 the egg cases of cockroaches; in 1 a grasshopper's egg; and in another a cricket's jaw.

Flies are practically ignored. What were probably the eggs of a crane fly were found in one stomach, but no adult flies were noted.

Spiders seem very palatable to the chickadee, being eaten every month and showing a higher percentage (10.9 per cent) in the stomachs than any other animal food except caterpillars. In five stomachs collected in March they amounted to 44.6 per cent, but a greater number of stomachs would probably modify this record. One stomach was practically filled with the remains of sowbugs. These appear to be the only animal food eaten that can not be obtained from a tree, shrub, or weed, and it is not clear how the chickadee could get them, for sowbugs are essentially terrestrial in habit and are usually found under a stone, clod, or mass of practically decayed

vegetation. A few bones and other tissues of a small unidentified vertebrate taken in June complete the animal food.

The vegetable food of the Carolina chickadee consists chiefly of fruit and seeds. Blackberries or raspberries, found in two stomachs; blueberries, in one; and fruit pulp not further identified, in five, constitute 2.17 per cent of the food for the year. Seeds of poison ivy (10.07 per cent for the year) appear to be a favorite food in the colder months, but only the waxy coating is eaten. This is taken off and swallowed and the real seed rejected, so that the bird does not aid in the distribution of this noxious plant as do so many birds that swallow the seeds and afterwards either disgorge them or pass them through the alimentary canal to fall and germinate in a different locality.

Other seeds, most of them so broken and ground up as to be unidentifiable, were eaten to the extent of 12.38 per cent, chiefly in the colder months. In nine stomachs taken during this season were pieces of liverwort, a plant of the lower order that grows upon the bark of trees or damp rocks. This seems a very curious food for a bird, and is probably taken when other supplies are scarce.

In a resume of the food of the Carolina chickadee, one is impressed with the fact that a large proportion consists of the eggs, pupæ, and larvæ of noxious insects. As an enemy of caterpillars the bird has few peers. It also destroys a great many of those two pests of horticulture, plant lice and scales.—*F. E. L. B. in Farmers' Bulletin.*





DOWN THE MORNING



I'M COMING down the morning with a tale upon my tongue
Of boundless leagues of blossom in the land where life is young.
Coming down the morning
With a rose to help you see
The green lanes of the country
Where the heart of time is free.

I greet you with a posey from the vines of old content
Where the gifts of sunny nature to the trusting heart are sent.
Greet you with a posey
That the fairies saw me take
To bring to town this morning
For the sweltering city's sake.

I'm coming down the morning on the first car up the line,
To bring a song of blossoms on the honeysuckle vine.
Coming down the morning
With a hail, well met, to you,
Who'll know me by the music
That is fresh from dells of dew.

—*Baltimore Sun.*





THE CHICKADEE



I AM cherry, black-capped Chickadee,
With my head as dark as the duskiest tree;
I'm as gray as the boughs of the beeches bare,
And as white as the snow that is lodging there;
While my sides are tinged like the willow wands,
That rim with yellow the streams and ponds.

As I dart about, as I swing and I sway,
No blinding storm doth me dismay,
For I'm borne with the flakes as they scurry
And I gleefully sing my tiny song:
"Chick-a-dee-dee-dee! Chick-a-dee-dee-dee!
This world holds nothing but good for me."

When insect eggs are incased in ice
In the crystallized trunks, I fly in a trice
To the homes of the human friends I know,
Who have spread me a feast on the crusted snow.
"Chick-a-dee-dee-dee! Chick-a-dee-dee-dee!
Oh, wouldn't you like to make friends with me?"

—A. E. B.



THE WOOD TRAILS



THE wood trails are free trails—they take no traveler's toll;
A green way, a clean way, they go by hill and hollow.
You know their sudden summons by a hunger in your soul
And wit to rise at break of day and follow, follow, follow.
Your fare is berries ripe and red and wild grades brimming over,
And crystal waters cold as snow in two palms for a cup,
Your bed at nightfall balsam boughs with wide, star-tufted cover
And sleep as deep as tranquil wells until the dawn comes up.

The wood trails are fair trails—at every dip and turn
The byways, the shy ways, are set with lovely wonder;
The lightest question step will leave a footprint on a fern,
The grayest gnarled and ancient oak has violets nodding under.
And whether quick to amber brooks with beryl bubbles breaking,
Or dim and slow through churchly pines, the little pathways go,
There's beauty for a lifted glance and treasure for the taking,
And certain secret old delight that only wanderers know.

The wood trails are long trails, mysterious and sweet—
A far way, a star way, they set a pilgrim faring;
And strangely, as you go the shoes are swifter on your feet,
The old-time burden on your back is lighter for the bearing;
While here a bough is blossoming and there a bush is burning,
And every hour's a singing bird for every mile you roam . . .
And best of all—most blest of all—with never backward turning
The wood trails, the good trails, they lead your spirit home!

—Nancy Byrd Turner.

SCREECH OWL



BLUE-EYED, strange-voiced, sharp-beak'd, ill-omen'd fowl,
What art thou?

—What I ought to be, an owl;
But if I'm such a scarecrow in your eye,
You're a much greater fright in mine;—good-by!

LENGTH, about 8 inches. Our smallest owl with ear tufts. There are two distinct phases of plumage, one grayish and the other bright rufous. Range: Resident throughout the United States, southern Canada, and northern Mexico.

Habits and economic status: The little screech owl inhabits orchards, groves, and thickets, and hunts for its prey in such places as well as along hedge-rows and in the open. During warm spells in winter it forages quite extensively and stores up in some hollow tree considerable quantities of food for use during inclement weather. Such larders frequently contain enough mice or other prey to bridge over a period of a week or more. With the exception of the burrowing owl it is probably the most insectivorous of the nocturnal birds of prey. It feeds also upon small mammals, birds, reptiles, batrachians, fish, spiders, crawfish, scorpions, and earthworms. Grasshoppers, crickets, ground-dwelling beetles, and caterpillars are its favorites among insects, as are field mice among mammals and sparrows among birds. Out of 324 stomachs examined, 169 were found to contain insects; 142, small mammals; 56, birds; and 15, crawfish. The screech owl should be encouraged to stay near barns and outhouses, as it will keep in check house mice and wood mice, which frequent such places.—*Biological Survey Bulletin*.

TO A GRACIOUS SUMMER



THE winds of summer never are so sweet
As when after a shower, calm and pure,
The slumbering south breaths on the tender moor
A soft caressing guile of nurtured heat.
Who then would journey fieldward, to his feet—
Sensations new are born and the strong lure
Of Fancy wakes one who would long endure:
In memoried hope to the heart's last fond beat!
Oh, pleasant then when happy days admit,
To lend a listening ear and softly feel
Zephyr abroad in whispering harmonies.
Then—then to lie me down or musing sit
A wise philosopher of passing time—to steal
Homeward at eve in brimful ecstasies!

—Robert Page Lincoln.



THE OWL



OH, MIGHTY king of wondrous sight,
On noiseless wing, you sweep through night;
Your fierceness reigns, you hold your power
In dark domains till morning hour.
Bold eagle may be king of day,
But you by right are king of night.

—A. C. Webb.

AUGUST NIGHT



THE grasses are alive tonight with song
That busy insects of the summer dusk
Through all the breathing countryside prolong;
The air is laden with the harvest-musk.
Above the western gable hangs a glow
Of silver beauty in the turquoise sky
And there the moon has bent her silver bow,
And all the dreams of ancient powers go by—
The orient trembles in a mist of moon
And hidden cities swing into the loom
Of woven magic purple lilies bloom
On tall stalks bending to an alien breeze.
And yonder come strange sails from foreign seas,
Triremes of Greece, and those feluccas blown
By Naples in the fairy-dreams of time
On wondrous oceans men have never known
Except in breathings of pellucid rhyme
The stars are not so brilliant, but they shape,
And through dim spaces hung with mists of gray
The visages of nymphs and satyrs gape
It is a magic moment of the earth,
When lovers pray, and priests on towers of prayer
Call to the gods of mystery and of mirth,
And scatter incense through the holy air
The cricket and the katydid make sweet
The closer spaces, and in dim woods there
Late whippoorwills their mournful call repeat,
A Bob White choir, the mocking-bird replies.
The brooding light grows softer in the skies,
The river gurgles oars beyond us sweep.
Out of the night look down a thousand eyes—
For one could waste such lovely hours in sleep!

—Folger McKinsey.

LONGINGS



COULD I but return to my woods once more,
 And dwell in their depths as I have dwelt,
 Kneel in their mosses as I have knelt,
 Sit where the cool white rivers run
 Away from the world and half hid from the sun,
 Hear wind in the woods of my storm-torn shore,
 Glad to the heart with listening,—
 It seems to me that I then could sing,
 And sing as I never have sung before.

O God! once more in my life to hear
 The voice of a wood that is loud and alive,
 That stirs with its being like a vast beehive!
 And oh, once more in my life to see
 The great bright eyes of the antlered deer;
 To sing with the birds that sing for me,
 To tread where only the red man trod,
 To say no word, but listen to God.



GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET



KINGLETS are dainty little birds between three and four inches long, with soft lax plumage, which in color is plain olive-green above, the wings with two narrow white bands, and dull whitish tinged with olive or dull yellowish below. The male has crown of orange and yellow, bordered with black, and the female, of yellow. They go about in parties, seeking their food of insects among the branches of trees and shrubbery. The nest of the kinglet is an exquisite example of bird architecture, being a large, round structure made of green moss, strips of bark, and fine rootlets, thickly lined with soft feathers. The eggs, numbering from five to ten, are dull whitish or grayish, finely speckled or sprinkled with brown or lilac; when the larger number of eggs is present, they are usually found in two layers, the nest being otherwise too small to hold them.



RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.
Life-size.

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RED-HEADED WOODPECKER



THIS very handsome species is common and very well known. The adults have the entire head and breast red; while the young have gray heads and back, streaked with darker. They are the ruffians of the woodpecker family, very noisy and quarrelsome. One of their worst traits is the devouring of the eggs and young of other birds. To offset this, partially, they eat insects and grubs and a great deal of fruit. Their note is a loud, whining "charr," "charr," besides numerous other calls and imitations. In May and June they lay four to six glossy white eggs in holes in trees in woods, orchards or along roadsides, and also in fence posts and telegraph poles.



THE WOODPECKER



WHO dat knockin' on my cabin do'
 Dis mo'nin' at break o' day?
 Who dat callin' "You lazy Jim,
 You better git up and make yo' hay
 An' clean yo' cotton row."

Who dat ringin' his breakfus' bell
 On de roof whar de white folks stay?
 Who call dem chil'en to jump in deir clo's
 An' wash deir face' an' hurry away
 To whar de school ma'am dwell?

Who dat hammerin' on de sycamo' lim',
 As de chil'en come trampin' through
 On de road to school 'long de bypath way
 A urgin' dem on to do deir do
 An' den come hunt fer him?

—A. C. Webb.



THE BIRD THAT FED AT THE PANE

To a yellow-throated vireo found dead under my window after a freeze.



HE WAS so like a poem
A wind-song sudden brings,
And like a splash of sunshine
Shone the light between his wings.
He came like a bright message,
As such he passed away,
And I miss my flower of sunlight
From my window pane today.

The twig whereon he rested
Is frozen, so the rain,
The crumbs are yet untasted
Outside the window pane.
A lonely heart is watching
For the flying joy today;
But it comes not—for the singer
And his song have passed away.
—Kate Slaughter McKinney.
January, 1899.





COMMON CROW



LENGTH, 19 inches. Range: Breeds throughout the United States and most of Canada; winters generally in the United States. Habits and economic status: The general habits of the crow are universally known. Its ability to commit such misdeeds as pulling corn and stealing eggs and fruit and to get away unscathed is little short of marvelous. Much of the crow's success in life is due to cooperation, and the social instinct of the species has its highest expression in the winter roosts, which are sometimes frequented by hundreds of thousands of crows. From these roosts daily flights of many miles are made in search of food. Injury to sprouting corn is the most frequent complaint against this species, but by coating the seed grain with coal tar most of this damage may be prevented. Losses of poultry and eggs may be averted by proper housing and the judicious use of wire netting. The insect food of the crow includes wireworms, cutworms, white grubs, and grasshoppers, and during outbreaks of these insects the crow renders good service. The bird is also an efficient scavenger. But chiefly because of its destruction of beneficial wild birds and their eggs the crow must be classed as a criminal, and a reduction in its numbers in localities where it is seriously destructive is justifiable. —*Farmers' Bulletin.*



IN DREAMS



I HEAR as in a dream the robin's call,
The lazy bee low droning to its lair ;
See hollyhocks beside the garden wall,
And creeping vines meandering everywhere.

As in a dream I hear the brooklet sing
Its way along the meadow where I stray
To watch the bobolinks on airy wing
Soar upward at the rosy dawn of day.

I dream my way along the woodland path
Where yesterday the Indian camp upreared ;
And later, asters like an aftermath
Of summer blossoms, starry-eyed, appeared.

Still dreaming, 'neath the hazy mystic veil
Fair Indian summer spreads o'er all the land,
I press my way along this woodland trail
Seeking God's handiwork to understand.

We dream our way to happiness, I wean ;
And here beside the firelight's cheerful glow
I live again in each familiar scene
That made me happy in the long ago.

—Helen M. Richardson.



THE HOURS TO COUNT



IN A sweet old English garden,
'Midst the lilies tall and fair,
Crimson cloves and damask roses
Breathing fragrance in the air,
You will find a moss-grown sundial,
And with patient care may trace
Wisdom in the Latin motto
Quaintly carven on its face.
On the lichen-covered marble,
Where the ivy tendrils twine,
"I will number not the hours
When the sun forgets to shine."

To our hearts we take this wisdom,
Garnered in the days of old,
We will keep no recollection
Of the moments gray and cold.
But will treasure in remembrance
All the happy, halcyon days,
When the way of life was sparkling,
And its sun was all ablaze.
Golden light of love shall linger
In its glory all divine,
We will number not the hours
When the sun forgets to shine.

—*Exchange.*



THE SERVICES OF THE BIRD IN THE GARDEN



THE garden is the insect's paradise. It fares sumptuously every day on the most succulent of vegetable foods. Every opportunity is thus offered for its increase. The greatest insect enemy of the gardener is a small, dull-colored, hairless caterpillar known as the cut-worm, which is the larvæ of a Noctuid moth. This chief of the brigand band of garden pests usually hides during the day beneath matted grass or under the loose soil along the rows of plants. It comes forth at dusk to feed. The bird is abroad at the first peep of day, and it finds the robber worm in the morning before it has retreated to its place of concealment.

But the early bird has to come stealthily to the garden to catch the worm. Its visits are regarded by man with more than suspicion, and it is fortunate if it escapes with its life. In consequence it snaps up a caterpillar and is off again, leaving thousands it would have eaten, if unmolested, to run riot amongst the vegetables.

Occasionally a bird more bold than its fellows will visit the garden in broad daylight to dig the cutworms out of their hiding places. Nature never having begrudged it the reward of its toil, the bird takes a few peas before leaving.

The gardener notices the damage done to his peas, and next morning is up betimes. He sees the bird running along a row of peas, stopping frequently to peck at something on the ground. There is a loud explosion, followed by a puff of smoke. The smoke slowly drifts away, to disclose a bird lying dead.

Caterpillars are not gifted with voice; if they were, they would scarce forbear to cheer.

The bird is dead. Mark the sequel. One fine morning the gardener issues proudly forth to cut his mammoth cabbage—the one with which he intends to put to utter confusion all other competitors at the local fruit and flower show. Alas for human hopes and the depredations of caterpillars. The cabbage is riddled like a colander.

The gardener when he shot the bird forgot, if, indeed, he ever knew, that the ancient law forbade a muzzle to the ox that thrashed out the corn.—*James Buckland.*

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT



THE chat is one of our largest and most notable warblers. It is a frequenter of brushy thickets and swampy new growth and, while not averse to showing itself, relies more upon its voice to announce its presence than upon its green and yellow plumage. Not infrequently the chat sings during the night. The song, for song we must call it, is an odd jumble of chucks and whistles which is likely to bring to mind the quip current in the West, "Don't shoot the musician; he is doing his best;" in this same charitable spirit we must accept the song of the chat at the bird's own valuation, which, we may be sure, is not low. Its nest is a rather bulky structure of grasses, leaves and strips of bark and is often so conspicuously placed in a low bush as to cause one to wonder how it ever escapes the notice of marauders fond of birds' eggs and nestlings.

The chat does no harm to agricultural interests, but on the contrary like most of the warbler family, lives largely on insects, and among them are many weevils, including the alfalfa weevil, and the boll weevil so destructive to cotton.—*Biological Survey Bulletin*.

WOOD PEWEE



IN LIFE, the pewee can best be distinguished from the larger phoebe with which it is often confounded, by its sad, plaintive "pe-ah-wee," "pee-wee," which is strikingly different from the brusque call of the phoebe. Pewees are also found more in high, dry woods where they build their little moss-covered homes on horizontal boughs at quite a height from the ground. Like the other flycatchers they always perch on dead twigs, where their view is as little obstructed as possible. The nest of the pewee is one of the most exquisite of bird creations, composed of plant fibres quilted together and ornamented with rock lichens; it is situated at varying heights on horizontal limbs, preferably oak or chestnut, and sometimes in apple trees in orchards. The eggs are creamy white, speckled with brown.



THE WOOD PEWEE



IN OLD deserted orchards,
A riot of neglect,
In solitudes of arching woods,
By streamlets which reflect
Long overhanging branches
With sunshine filtering through,
A plaintive, tender, wistful note
May flutter down to you.
Perchance upon some leafless bough
Near a woodland path, you'll see
A tiny bird of olive brown,
The gentle wood pewee.

Such pathos in his long-drawn note,
You feel impelled to wait
To comfort him; and if you call,
He'll answer you. His mate
Sits on her lichen-covered nest,—
Most exquisite,—while near
He hovers, and he breathes to her,
"Pe-wee! Pe-wee! Here!"
Now far away his voice is heard,—
From sadness never free;
As from an over-burdened heart
He murmurs, "Pee-a-wee."

—A. E. B.



BREWER'S BLACKBIRD



WELL done!—they're noble notes, distinct and strong;
Yet more variety might mend the song.
—Is there another bird that chants like me?
My pipe gives all the grove variety.

LENGTH, 10 inches. Its glossy purplish head distinguishes it from other blackbirds that do not show in flight a trough-shaped tail. Range: Breeds in the West, east to Texas, Kansas, and Minnesota, and north to southern Canada; winters over most of the United States breeding range, south to Guatemala.

Habits and economic status: Very numerous in the West and in fall gathers in immense flocks, especially about barnyards and corrals. During the cherry season in California Brewer's blackbird is much in the orchards. In one case they were seen to eat freely of cherries, but when a neighboring fruit raiser began to plow his orchard almost every blackbird in the vicinity was upon the newly opened ground and close at the plowman's heels in its eagerness to get the insects exposed by the plow. Caterpillars and pupæ form the largest item of animal food (about 12 per cent). Many of these are cutworms, and cotton bollworms or corn earworms were found in 10 stomachs and codling-moth pupæ in 11. Beetles constitute over 11 per cent of the food. The vegetable food is practically contained in three items—grain, fruit, and weed seeds. Grain, mostly oats, amounts to 54 per cent; fruit, largely cherries, 4 per cent; and weed seeds, not quite 9 per cent. The grain is probably mostly wild, volunteer or waste, so that the bird does most damage by eating fruit.
—*Biological Survey Bulletin.*

COMING OF DAY



SLOWLY the faint purple light
 Flushes all the eastern sky,
 And the phantoms of the night
 To far-off dark regions fly.
 Darkness turns to tinted grey,
 While glad birds break forth in song,
 And slow down the eastern way
 Rosy hues are spread along.
 Soon the tiny creatures wake,
 Shaking with their songs the dew,
 And the jeweled light doth break
 On a world all fresh and new.
 Then we drink the air as wine,
 And thrill with exalted life,
 In the moments all divine
 Ere full-robed day brings its strife.

—George Lawrence Andrews.



THE BLACKBIRD



IN CLUMPS of pines and spruces tall
 The blackbirds love to congregate,
 And there they creak and squeak; their call
 Sounds like a rusty garden-gate.
 Their tails are kite-shaped as they fly;
 You'll see, when they are on the ground,
 How knowing is each yellow eye,
 As haughtily they *walk* around.
 Their heads like brilliant jewels gleam
 With bronze and purple, green and blue;
 They're not so lovely as they seem,
 For nests they rob—black deeds they do.

—A. E. B.



VALUE OF BIRDS TO LIVE STOCK



THE injury done to domestic animals by biting and parasitic insects is very great. Herds of cattle are often stampeded by these tormenting creatures, which carry disease and death among them. Another great affliction is the warble, which is a small tumor produced by the larva of the gadfly on the backs of cattle, and the constant irritation of which causes considerable depreciation in the value of hides, besides a lessened quantity and poorer quality of beef.

Horses, sheep, and other farm animals are subject to the attacks of similar parasites and other persecuting insect foes.

If it were not for the services the bird renders in alighting on animals in search of these parasites, or in catching the flies on the wing, or in eating them in the embryo state, man would be unable to keep his live stock.

More than this, man himself would be unable to inhabit many places on the earth which he now cultivates, or where he carries on other lucrative industries.—*James Buckland.*



"THE LITTLE MEN IN GREEN"



IN SILENCE soft they listen,
But not for tuck of drum ;
They wait on pleading bugle,
But only one word, "Come!"
And rank on rank, in billions,
With crowded bayonets keen,
Shall rise, implacable and sure,
The Little Men in Green.

They bivouac in the dooryard,
They camp in every field ;
They number as the star dust,
And might is their shield.
A word will set them springing
From every eager sod,
A host no man can number,
Invincible as God.

They sink the potent plowshare,
And lay the furrows wide,
For they're Jehovah's trenches,
And there His hosts abide.
Can man withstand His maker?
Shall hate its victory glean
When Freedom's soil hath marshaled
Her Little Men in Green?

Put in the homely plowshare,
Thrust deep the sturdy spade ;
A child's weak hands, unaided,
Shall arm a new brigade ;
Tall grenadiers in tassels
From Illinois' wide plain
Shall fight for famished Poland
And help to free Lorraine.

On wind-blown Northern prairies
The wheat shall bare its blade,
The cotton toss its turban
In every Southern glade;
And bearded oats in armies
Shall set their lances keen,
And all shall answer, "Coming,
You Little Men in Green."

The grandsire and his grandson
Shall labor side by side;
The dewy dawn shall greet them,
A star shall be their guide;
The soil shall not be barren
That righteous wrath has plowed,
Nor Freedom's sod turn sullen
Till sloth her sun becloud.

What matter though the weakling
Withhold his futile hand?
By Belgium's murdered millions,
We'll mobilize the land!
'Tis God himself that arms us,
And mortal hath not seen
The legions that can stand against
The Little Men in Green.

—Edward Williston Frantz, of the
Vigilantes.





THE BLUEBIRD



O N BIRD of blue, with your robe from the sky,
And a flame in your red-brown breast,
When the home-love burns, from the South you fly,
To the chill of your northern nest.
"Tru-ly,—tru-ly,—tru-ly."

O wonderful bird with the loyal heart,
To your home and mate you are true;
Our own hearts leap, when the cold March days
Bring the first glad sight of you.
"Tru-ly,—tru-ly,—tru-ly."

O beautiful bird with the tender note
You sing of the days to be;
You promise bright skies and an earth renewed,
And we wait expectantly.
"Tru-ly,—tru-ly,—tru-ly."

—A. E. B.



BLUEBIRD



THE bluebird is a veritable harbinger of spring and messenger of good cheer; the "blue of the sky is upon his back and on his breast the tints of its rosy dawn." As soon as weather conditions permit, they set about house building, and after the inspection of all available sites select a nesting box, a hole in a tree, a hollow post, and upon a scant lining of soft grasses deposit from four to six pale blue, rarely white, unspotted eggs. During the summer bluebirds feed almost exclusively upon insects, such as grasshoppers, beetles, moths and spiders, often flying to the ground for their capture. The call is a short sweet warble, and the song a continued warbling.

"Typical of all that is pleasing in bird life generally, the bluebird is especially cherished wherever it is found, and on esthetic grounds alone is carefully protected. It ranges in the breeding season throughout the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, and remains in winter as far north as the southern parts of Illinois and Pennsylvania. It is one of the most domestic of our wild feathered friends and readily takes possession of the box erected for its accommodation where it can be safe from cats and other prowlers, or utilizes crannies of farm buildings for its nest; its original homes, however, were in such places as deserted woodpecker-holes or cavities in old stumps. These birds are usually abundant wherever found and their numbers are maintained by the rearing of two and frequently three broods a year, with from four to six young in each. The food supply for such large families may well concern the farmer, and he will be interested to learn what these birds relish most.

"In the animal food the largest portion is made up of orthopterous insects (grasshoppers, crickets, and katydids), totaling 20.53 per cent for the year. Most insects of this group are harmful and at times very destructive. Second in importance in the diet are beetles (18.79 per cent), made up in part of useful ground beetles (10.38 per cent of the total food), but in this item also are May beetles (3.9 per cent), weevils, or snout beetles (1.13 per cent), and miscellaneous related forms (3.38 per cent). The useful beetles are sometimes eaten in such numbers as to detract from the esteem in

which the bluebird is held, the month of May, for instance, charging them against the bird to the extent of 36.61 per cent of the food, and every month recording them in such quantities as to indicate that they are very palatable to the bluebird. Few birds exceed this record of destruction of useful beetles, but it must be remembered that for the year they form only about one-tenth of the food, and that the remaining food shows that insects as a whole are attacked so impartially that the balance of nature is not disturbed, and while one kind of insect life is not exterminated another is not allowed to become superabundant; grasshoppers, for instance, enter the food of the bluebird about in proportion to their abundance.

"The group third in order of importance in the animal food contains the many forms of caterpillars, including a few moths (9.59 per cent). Chief among these are the owlet moths, the larvæ of which are the well-known cutworms, but there are also included hairy caterpillars and the "yellow bear." The rest of the animal food is made up of flying insects, as wasps, bees, and flies, in small quantities, for the bird is not very active on the wing; of ants and bugs, among which later stinkbugs predominate; remains of chinch bugs, detected in one stomach; a few spiders (2.47 per cent); still fewer myriapods, or thousand-legs (1.23 per cent); a mere trace of sowbugs and snails; and a few bones of lizards and tree frogs.

"The vegetable food consists largely of fruit obtained from pastures, swamps, and hedgerows, rather than from gardens and orchards. Practically all the domestic fruit taken was secured in June and November, and the only cultivated species identified were cherries and raspberries or blackberries. In December, wild fruit forms two-thirds of the monthly food, but this item decreases gradually each month, and in May no fruit of any kind is taken. The yearly average is about a third of the total food. As fruit is taken chiefly in winter, it follows that it is eaten to tide the bird over until insects are again abundant, partly taking the place of seeds in the winter diet of birds in general, though seeds, too, are occasionally and sparingly eaten by the bluebird. Among them are seeds of sumac of both harmless and poisonous kinds, bayberry, and a little indeterminate vegetable refuse and rubbish, together averaging 7.21 per cent of the yearly food.

"The bluebird has never been accused, in the writer's knowledge, of objectionable habits, and cultivated crops are not only safe from its attacks, but are benefited by its ridding them of an over-

abundance of harmful insects. In spring and early summer, when berries and small fruits are at their best, the bird subsists upon insects to the extent of five-sixths of its food. Its fruit-eating period is from late fall to early spring, when insects are scarce and waste fruit available. The point that has been urged against the bird, its destruction of predacious beetles, is a harmful trait more apparent than real, inasmuch as its record on all other lines is absolutely in its favor. Field observation and laboratory analysis of the food fully justify the high esteem in which the bird is held, and there is not the slightest excuse for persecuting it or withdrawing from it the smallest degree of protection."—*F. E. L. B. in Farmers' Bulletin.*



THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS



THE night comes on apace. The rain,
The warm, still rain, falls soft again.
I feel the breath of growing things;
I seem to hear the whir of wings
Of countless birds, just marshaling
Their ranks for long, long journeying.

The songsters bold that fly by day,
Near gleaming waters wing their way,
Their timid fellows shun the light—
God guides them through the dusky night,
But every heart holds home-love strong
Enough to brave the distance long.

—A. E. B.

THE BLUEBIRD



I AM so blithe and glad today!
At morn I heard a bluebird sing;
The bluebird, warbling soul of spring,
The prophet of the leafy May,—
And I knew the violets under the tree
Would listen and look the birds to see,
Peeping timidly, here and there,
In purple and odor to charm the air;
And the wind-flower lift its rose-veined cup,
In the leaves of the old year buried up;
And all the delicate buds that bloom
On the moss-beds, deep in the forest gloom,
Would stir in their slumber, and catch the strain
And dream of the sun and the April rain,—
For spring has come when the bluebird sings,
And folds in the maple his glossy wings,
And the wind may blow, and the storm may fall,
But the voice of summer is heard in all.

I am so blithe and glad today!
My heart, beside the bluebird, sings,
And folds serene its weary wings,
And knows the hours lead on to May.

—Edna Dean Proctor.



PAINTED BUNTING



THE male painted bunting is one of the most brilliantly colored birds of the United States. The upper part of the head and neck are shining purplish violet, the middle of the back yellowish



PAINTED BUNTING. LENGTH, ABOUT $5\frac{1}{4}$ INCHES

green, wings and tail purplish blue, and underparts and rump vermilion. The female is dark green above and yellowish beneath.

This little jewel has not failed to attract popular attention and in consequence has received a variety of common names. In Louis-

iana the French speaking people have called it nonpareil (unequaled), and le pape (the pope). The last name has been contracted to pop and varied as red pop. Spanish speaking citizens know the bird as mariposa (butterfly), and in English the bird has been variously named painted bunting or finch, paradise finch, Mexican canary, and Texas canary.

The painted bunting is not only distinguished in appearance, but also is one of the most pleasing songsters among the finches. It is a persistent vocalist, and this characteristic, in addition to its beauty and activity, makes it a most desirable species for the vicinity of homes. Fortunately the bird is not averse to proximity to man, and its preference for shrubbery further adapts it to living about door-yards and gardens. The nest, though usually placed low, is well concealed, and the eggs number three to five.

Few complaints have been lodged against the painted bunting on the score of its food habits. It is said to eat rice at times, to peck into figs and grapes, and to bite off the tips of pecan shoots. In no case that has come to notice, however, has it been charged with doing serious damage. Certainly no such charge is supported by the investigations of the Biological Survey, for no product of husbandry has thus far been found in any of the stomachs, 80 of which have been examined, all collected in Texas in July, August, and September. Averages for the July and August material only are here presented. Animal matter composed 20.86 per cent of the contents of these stomachs, and vegetable matter 79.14 per cent. Of the former, 2.48 per cent was made up of weevils, mostly cotton boll weevils. All insects of this group are destructive, but none more so than the notorious cotton boll weevil, and this species had been eaten by 18 of the 80 nonpareils examined.

Another enemy of the cotton crop attacked by these brightly colored little birds is the cotton worm. This insect was preyed upon to the extent of 3.14 per cent of the total food of the 80 painted buntings examined. Other insects eaten included grasshoppers, crickets, click beetles, leaf beetles, caterpillars, true bugs, and small hymenopterans. A few spiders and one snail also were taken.

The vegetable food is remarkable in consisting very largely of a single item—the seeds of foxtail or pigeon grass. This is one of

the worst weeds in the United States. The 80 painted buntings made over two-thirds (precisely 67.03 per cent) of their total food of its seeds. The seeds of other grasses composed 5.88 per cent of the food, grasses alone thus furnishing over nine-tenths of the vegetable portion. The other vegetable matter eaten consists largely of seeds of such weeds as amaranth, mallow, sorrel, and nail grass.

To sum up, practically all of the vegetable food of the painted bunting is of weed seeds, two-thirds of it being the seeds of foxtail grass, one of the worst weed pests. The animal food also is composed almost exclusively of injurious species, more than a fourth of it consisting of the two greatest pests of the cotton crop—the cotton worm and the boll weevil.—*W. L. M. in Farmers' Bulletin.*



AUTUMN



THY hair soft lifted by the winnowing wind,
Or, on a half reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fumes of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady that laden head across a brook,
Or by a cider press with patient look
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.
Where are the songs of spring. Aye, where are they?
Think not of them; thou hast thy music, too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue;
Then in a willful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn.
Hedge crickets sing and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

—*John Keats.*

THE INDIGO BUNTING



HIS plumage is bright as the sapphire blue
 That dwells in the depths of Italy's sea,
 And blends with the hidden emerald hue
 To glint and glisten shimmeringly.
 His song bursts forth like the brooklet's rush,
 Or murmuring waves' sweet melody;
 And even when falls midsummer's hush,
 The indigo-bird sings rapturously:
 "See, see, sweet, sweet, chur, chur;
 Wish, wish, wish—chur, chur, chur."

—A. E. B.



OUT IN THE FIELD WITH GOD



THE little cares that fretted me,
 I lost them yesterday.
 Among the fields above the sea,
 Among the winds at play,
 Among the lowing of the herds,
 The rustling of the trees,
 Among the singing of the birds,
 The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what may happen
 I cast them all away,
 Among the clover-scented grass,
 Among the new-mown hay,
 Among the husking of the corn
 Where drowsy poppies nod,
 Where ill thoughts die and good are born,
 Out in the fields with God.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

PUTTING UP BIRD BOXES



HOW TO MAKE AND WHERE TO PLACE THEM

THERE is no keener pleasure derived from any source than that which comes from the possession of bird neighbors. No class of tenants give more complete satisfaction than box-dwelling birds, houses for which can be cheaply and easily erected. No class of tenants can be relied upon for more full and complete rental, in the shape of noxious insects destroyed, delightful music rendered and, further, they are an unfailing source of amusing and instructive incidents. The boy or girl who puts up boxes for the birds to nest in, supplies them with drinking and bathing places, and provides food for those species which remain in winter, is certain of an unfailing source of pleasure, which can never be known to any one who pursues them with bean-shooter or stones, or simply ignores their presence. The chances are far better that the bird-loving boy or girl will make the better citizen.

Birds, like human beings, are capable of adapting themselves to circumstances to a very great degree. This is well illustrated in the barn and cliff swallows, which in settled localities have taken to nesting on the rafters and under the eaves of barns, instead of upon the faces of cliffs as did their ancestors, and as their brethren of less settled sections still do. In preparing nesting places for the birds, it should be borne in mind that the kind which will most readily appeal to them are such as most nearly approach to their natural nesting sites. Bluebirds and house wrens are the species which most quickly respond to an invitation to nest in artificial sites about our homes, and are the least critical as to the architecture of their dwellings. The roughest shelters and the most ornate structures are both acceptable to these welcome bird neighbors, but plain and weather-stained boxes are most sure of an early tenant, though with the bluebird and house wren the appeal of a convenient knot-hole or natural cavity in a limb is apt to be stronger than the attractions of any box.

Purple martins prefer to nest in colonies, and elaborate, many-roomed houses are often fully occupied in sections where the birds

are still found. Unfortunately, they are comparatively rare in contrast with their former numbers. Tree or white-bellied swallows sometimes occupy the more elaborate boxes, but have a much stronger preference for the more natural cavity in the limb of a tree than do most species. The crested flycatcher has nested in such natural cavities, near houses, though normally a rather retiring bird. The possibility of this bird for a neighbor is well worth providing attractions in the shape of alluring cavities. Should a pair of these birds accept such a site they must not be too much troubled by attentions until the eggs are hatched. In suitable spots the chickadee may avail himself of a well-chosen natural cavity provided for his accommodation. The flicker is sometimes not averse to accepting a ready-constructed home. Finally, in the orchard it may be possible to have a screech owl for a tenant, and be assured he is in every way a tenant worth having. As a mouse and rat trap he is far superior to the house cat, and if his vocal efforts are not musical, it at least has range and expression.

Screech owls, bluebirds and chickadees are for the most part resident throughout the year. All of them are most apt to frequent the neighborhood of our homes in search of food in winter, therefore winter is the time to get the tenant house into place. The birds are not slow to avail themselves of such shelters as roosting places from cold and inclement weather. Becoming acquainted with the advantages of these sites in winter, it is quite natural for the birds in the spring to bring their mates thither, and there establish their summer home.

The most natural bird homes, and such as may often be provided with the least trouble, are pieces of hollow limbs or small hollow trunks of trees, or the old nesting holes of woodpeckers. If no limbs with suitable cavities are found, they may be made by taking a piece of a limb, about eight inches in diameter and fourteen to sixteen inches long, dividing it in half, with a rip saw, from one end to within about three inches of the other, where it is met by a right-angle cut from the side. At this point an entrance hole is made through the shorter or front half. The two halves are then hollowed out so as to form a cylindrical cavity about three and one-half inches in diameter, and ten inches deep, when the two halves are placed together and wired. It has this advantage that if a young

bird dies, or the home becomes obstructed in any way beyond the remedying of the tenants, the landlord may open it and rectify the trouble. A perch is provided just below the entrance by way of a front porch. A similar bird home is made by boring an augur hole from one end of a piece of limb to within a couple of inches of the other, plugging the bored end and making an entrance hole near the other end. These nesting places are for bluebirds, house wrens, chickadees and tree swallows. A little larger homes of the same type are required for crested flycatchers, and decidedly larger ones for flickers. A good-sized deserted flicker home or similar cavity provides a nesting site to attract the screech owl. A piece of the wooden tubing from a chain pump, with the ends plugged and a side entrance hole made near the upper end, the tube being covered with bark, makes a very good substitute for a hollow limb. Even a long, narrow box, made up in about the same manner and covered with bark, answers very well. If old and weather-stained boards are used, the bark covering is not absolutely necessary, but it adds to the attractiveness, both from the bird and the human standpoint.

Another method of making artificial hollow limbs, which has been described, is to cut limbs of the proper diameter, according to the tenant for whom they are intended; saw them in sections of proper length; make an incision through the bark on one side from one end to the other; on the opposite side bore a hole through the bark for an entrance; then with a wooden wedge carefully separate the bark from the limb until it is entirely free. Sections of the limb an inch and a half in length are sawed off and nailed into the ends of the bark, and over the slit in the back a strip of branch or wood is nailed, which in turn is nailed to the tree or other support where the nesting place is to rest. Small drainage holes to allow the water to escape from the bottom of any artificial nesting limbs or boxes in case rain should drive in, and sloping and protecting tops to shed rain, are important in all cases. Pieces of limb, natural or artificial, may be wired to the trunk or branches of a shade tree, or fastened on top of a post, which may be covered with growing vines, but care must be taken to guard against the raids of cats and squirrels. A piece of tin fastened around the trunk of the tree or the post which bears the bird box, in the shape of an inverted funnel, is sometimes used to prevent cats gaining access to the nest, and when the box is

on a post a strip of heavy square-mesh poultry wire may be placed on top of the post, under the box. On the grounds belonging to a neighbor of the writer, in a woodbine growing on a post, directly under the wire guard and box, a song sparrow built her nest and reared her brood.

Dried gourds, hollowed out, with an opening made for an entrance, hung in a tree often attract wrens and sometimes bluebirds. In fact, wrens will utilize old tin cans or almost any sort of receptacle. The writer saw one nest built in an old elbow of conductor pipe that hung in an unused chicken-house, and another on the ashes in a barrel ash-sifter.

To utilize an old tomato can, the flap which has been almost severed from the box in removing the fruit has a small hole cut out by making two slits about an inch apart and the same length, bending up the piece between the cuts. The rough edges around the entrance of any tin nesting receptacle should always be bent over to prevent birds being injured by them. Such a nesting box is either tacked to a piece of board, which is in turn fastened up on the side of a building or the trunk of a tree, or it may be fastened directly to the building or tree by two nails driven obliquely through the end from the sides. An old funnel with the large end nailed against the side of a building or the trunk of a tree makes another readily provided nesting place. Coffee pots, tea kettles, milk cans, lard pails and flower pots are among the discarded utensils which may be fastened up in suitable places for the use of the birds as nesting sites.

Receptacles for wrens' nests may have entrance holes about the size of a silver quarter dollar, large enough to admit the wren but too small for the English sparrow. This bird is another enemy to our native birds, and one which has done more than any other agency to drive them from our grounds, utilizing for his own nest the places provided for wrens and bluebirds, and quarreling with and driving away even those species whose nesting habits do not in any way conflict with his own. Boy and girl landlords must guard against these undesirable naturalized citizens, removing their nests when they start to build, and frightening the little disturbers off the grounds.

Some writers find hanging boxes or nesting limbs, hung in the branches of trees by wires, proof against the English sparrow, which is wary of any nesting site not absolutely stable. Others have not always found this method successful. It is probable that as a rule the sparrows would not trouble such domiciles.

The older boys may obtain permission to make themselves, and the younger ones and the girls may get their fathers or older brothers to make for them, artificial chimneys to be placed on the roof of barn or shed, or against the side, near the roof, to afford the chimney swifts a nesting place. With the hollow trees have also gone the big old-fashioned chimneys, and the modern ones with small flues afford scant sites for the swifts. The artificial one described may be a single flue of sufficient proportions, or it may be divided into several flues, after the manner of the genuine chimneys. Like the chimney swifts, the barn and cliff swallows have suffered the loss of a large number of the nesting sites available to them in the days of the early settlement of the country. Barns are no longer made of rough lumber, with openings for the birds to enter, and abundant resting place for their nests on the old-fashioned rough and rounded rafters. If openings of good size are left in the gable ends of the barn, well up under the roof, and horizontal bits of boards are tacked to the rafters in the form of shelves on which nests can find a resting place, the barn swallows may be attracted to occupy the barn, while the eave or cliff swallow may be similarly attracted by a narrow shelf or ledge nailed on the side of the barn a few inches below the eaves. It is well worth while to bring back these feathered neighbors, not alone for the pleasure of their companionship, but for the sake of the flies, mosquitoes and other annoying insects they will destroy.—*B. S. Bowdish.*



THE BEST ROAD OF ALL



I LIKE a road that leads away to prospects white and fair,
A road that is an ordered road, like a nun's evening prayer,
But, best of all, I love a road that leads to God knows where.

You come upon it suddenly—you cannot seek it out;
It's life a secret still unheard and never noised about;
But when you see it, gone at once is every lurking doubt.

It winds beside some rushing stream where aspens lightly quiver;
It follows many a broken field by many a shining river;
It seems to lead you on and on, forever and forever!

You tramp along its dusty way, beneath its shadowy trees,
And hear beside you chattering birds or happy booming bees,
And all around you golden sounds, the green leaves' litanies.

And here's a hedge, and there's a cot! and then—strange, sudden
turns;
A dip, a rise, a little glimpse where the red sunset burns;
A bit of sky at evening time, the scent of hidden ferns.

A winding road, a loitering road, a finger mark of God
Traced when the Maker of the world leaned over ways untrod.
See! Here He smiled His glowing smile, and lo, the goldenrod!

I like a road that wanders straight; the Wing's highway is fair
And lovely are the sheltered lanes that take you here and there;
But, best of all, I love a road that leads to God knows where.

—Charles Hanson Towne.



MOORNING DOVE.
(*Zenaidura macroura*).
Life-size.

NIGHTFALL



THE day dies.

The last faint ember of the setting sun
Goes out, and long, dark Night comes on apace,
A stillness wraps the world in solemn thought,
No song of bird, no rustle of the breeze
Disturbs the sacred silence of the hour.
On rapid wing, a solitary dove
Pursues her lonely and belated flight
To eastward skies o'ercast with leaden clouds,
So white, so sad, so lost in such a sky!
Her course is straight and swift as arrow's flight—
And darkness swallows up the white-winged bird,
A star peeps out—and Night is on the world.

—Edward M. Carney, in *Collier's Weekly*.

MOURNING DOVE



ART thou the bird that saw the waters cease?
—Yes, and brought home the olive-leaf of peace;
Henceforth I haunt the woods of thickest green,
Please to be often heard, but seldom seen.

THE mourning dove is from eleven to thirteen inches long, the male being olive grayish-brown above, the crown bluish-gray with a glaucous bloom, while the sides of the neck are glossed with changeable metallic purple, and the under parts are vinaceous, becoming creamy buff on the lower abdomen and under tail-coverts. The female is slightly smaller, generally paler, and is not purplish below. The dark spot on the side of the neck distinguishes the bird from all other native doves and pigeons except the white-winged dove. The latter has the upper third of the wing white. Mourning doves feed on small seed, grain, berries, small acorns and beechnuts; the dove eats no insects or other animal food. The nest is placed in a great variety of situations, sometimes on the ground or a bare rock without the presence of even a few straws, but usually it is a frail platform of twigs placed on bushes. There are usually two eggs laid, and sometimes two or three broods are raised in a season.

The dove is esteemed very highly in Alabama as a game bird.



THE MOURNING DOVE



SEEK open woods or tree-girt fields—
Beneath a sky of blue;
A plaintive voice such woodland yields—
“Coo-coo-a-coo-coo.”

You’ll rarely glimpse the gray-brown wing
Or breast of topaz hue,
Or glistening head—a jewelled thing;
You’ll hear, “Coo-coo-a-coo.”

“Why grieveest thou, O Mourning Dove?
Is thy sweet mate untrue?”
He only answers—to his love—
“Coo-coo—I love you.”

By chance you’ll find the flat, crude nest,
Eggs white, or babies two;
’Tis not the young, in voice distressed,
That cry, “Coo-coo-a-coo!”

Each morn and night, on swiftest wings
To waters hid from view,
Doves fly; drink deep of crystal springs,
And murmur, “Coo-a-coo.”

—A. E. B.



YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO



WHY art thou always welcome, lonely bird?
—The heart grows young again when I am heard;
Nor in my double note the magic lies,
But in the fields, the woods, the streams, and skies.

LENGTH, about 12 inches. The yellow lower part of the bill distinguishes this bird from its near relative, the black-billed cuckoo. Range: Breeds generally in the United States and southern Canada; winters in South America. Habits and economic status: This bird lives on the edges of woodland, in groves, orchards, parks, and even in shaded village streets. It is sometimes known as rain crow, because its very characteristic notes are supposed to foretell rain. The cuckoo has sly furtive ways as it moves among the bushes or flits from tree to tree, and is much more often seen than heard. Unlike its European relative, it does not lay its eggs in other birds' nests, but builds a nest of its own. This is, however, a rather crude and shabby affair—hardly more than a platform of twigs sufficient to hold the greenish eggs. The cuckoo is extremely useful because of its insectivorous habits, especially as it shows a marked preference for the hairy caterpillars, which few birds eat. One stomach that was examined contained 250 American tent caterpillars; another, 217 fall webworms. In places where tent caterpillars are abundant they seem to constitute a large portion of the food of this and the black-billed cuckoo.—*Biological Survey Bulletin*.

TO THE CUCKOO



O BLITHE new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.
—Wordsworth.



THE RAINMAKER



STRANGE prophet bird, won't you explain
How you foretell the coming rain?
You called at an early morning hour,
And by ten o'clock we had a shower.

When no rain falls for weeks and weeks,
And hot winds fan our blistering cheeks,
And fields grow parched and streams run dry,
Then don't you sometimes tell a lie?
—A. C. Webb.



LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE



LENGTH, about 9 inches. A gray, black, and white bird, distinguished from the somewhat similarly colored mocking bird by the black stripe on side of head: Range: Breeds throughout the United States, Mexico, and southern Canada; winters in the southern half of the United States and in Mexico.

Habits and economic status: The loggerhead shrike, or southern butcher bird, is common throughout its range and is sometimes called "French mocking bird" from a superficial resemblance and not from its notes, which are harsh and unmusical. The shrike is naturally an insectivorous bird which has extended its bill of fare to include small mammals, birds, and reptiles. Its hooked beak is well adapted to tearing its prey, while to make amends for the lack of talons it has hit upon the plan of forcing its victim, if too large to swallow, into the fork of a bush or tree, where it can tear it asunder. Insects, especially grasshoppers, constitute the larger part of its food, though beetles, moths, caterpillars, ants, wasps, and a few spiders are also taken. While the butcher bird occasionally catches small birds, its principal vertebrate food is small mammals, as field mice, shrews, and moles, and when possible it obtains lizards. It habitually impales its surplus prey on a thorn, sharp twig, or barb of a wire fence.—*Biological Survey Bulletin.*



LADY OCTOBER



LITTLE brown lady,
Come put on your gold!
The woodlands are burning,
Strange stories are told
Of rainbows for crescents
And moonlight to show
The hills as they glisten,
The tides as they flow.

Little brown lady,
Come out with your smile
Of saffron and scarlet
In gay autumn style!
The hours were so happy
When sweet summer spun;
Come, lady of autumn
And dance in the sun!

Little brown lady,
They said you were sad;
Come put on your bonnet
And turn them all mad!
They'll then see your splendor,
They'll know then the truth,
That still in life's ember
Burns beautiful youth.

Little brown lady,
Come don your red sash,
With the moon for a buckle,
The bright stars to flash!
The frost on the cobwebs,
Like jewels in your hair,
And, ah, the bright purple
That dreams in the air!

—*The Bentztown Bard.*

BROWN THRASHER



FEW birds excel the brown thrasher in sweetness of song, but it is so shy that its notes are not heard often enough to be appreciated. Its favorite time for singing is in early morning, when, perched on the top of some tall bush or low tree, it gives an exhibition of vocal powers which would do credit to a mockingbird. In-



BROWN THRASHER. LENGTH, ABOUT 11½ INCHES

deed where the latter bird is abundant, the thrasher is sometimes known as the sandy mocker.

The brown thrasher breeds throughout the United State east of the Great Plains, and winters in South Atlantic and Gulf States. It occasionally visits the garden or orchard, but nests in swamps or in groves standing upon low ground, and sometimes builds in a pile of brush at a distance from trees. On account of its more retiring habits it is not so conspicuous as the robin, though it may be equally abundant.

The food of the thrasher consists of both fruit and insects. An examination of 266 stomachs showed 37.38 per cent vegetable and 62.62 per cent animal food, the latter practically all insects.

The most noticeable peculiarity in the food is that no one item is greatly in excess of others, while in the case of the yellow-billed cuckoo, for instance, caterpillars constitute more than half the food. With the thrasher the largest item is made up of beetles (18.14 per cent). A few of these (4.82 per cent) are of useful species, mostly predacious ground beetles. Others (13.32 per cent) are of a more or less harmful character, the great bulk being May beetles and weevils, or snout beetles. Among the latter is the notorious cotton boll weevil, found in six stomachs. May beetles, when in the grub stage, injure roots of grass and other plants. The 12-spotted cucumber beetle, another destructive pest, also was found in many stomachs. Beetles are eaten regularly throughout the year, although a little more from March to June than in other months.

Ants form a surprisingly small percentage of the yearly food (1.38 per cent) when the fact is considered that the thrasher gets most of its food upon the ground, where most ants live. The small destruction of bees and wasps (0.93 per cent) is not surprising, as the thrasher is hardly agile enough on the wing to catch such swift fliers. These three insects, however, are very evenly distributed throughout the year, each month showing a small percentage. Bugs, mostly stinkbugs with a few negro bugs, make up 1.54 per cent and are very regularly distributed. One bird taken in Illinois had eaten chinch bugs, but none were found in stomachs from farther south. Flies (1.76 per cent) are evidently not a favorite food of the thrasher, and nearly all of those eaten were taken in November. One stomach secured that month in a Mississippi cotton field was filled with flies except 6 per cent of fruit of "French mulberries"; the bird had probably found a colony of flies hibernating in a crevice and had devoured the whole lot.

Caterpillars (5.95 per cent) stand next to beetles in the thrasher's food, and are taken every month except November; that month, however, is represented by only five stomachs. Grasshoppers and crickets would seem to be very available to the thrasher, as the insects live on the ground, where also the birds get their food; but, unlike the meadowlark, these birds do not esteem grasshopper diet enough to go out in the sunshine to seek it. This food (2.43 per cent for the year) is taken to some extent every month, the maximum (8.5 per cent) in September.

A few insects of other groups are picked up occasionally. In all they amount to only one-fourth of 1 per cent. Spiders (0.58

per cent) are eaten now and then, and myriapods (thousand-legs) to a somewhat greater extent (2.24 per cent), but very irregularly, the maximum (8 per cent) in January. A few miscellaneous animals, like crawfish, sowbugs, snails, and angle worms, make up 1.26 per cent. Bones of lizards, salamanders, and tree frogs (in all, 0.92 per cent) were found in 11 stomachs.

Of the insects eaten by the brown thrasher there is only one class to which exception can be taken—the predacious beetles. That these insects render some service to man is beyond reasonable doubt, though some of them also do injury. Their destruction, then, is not an unmixed harm, but in any case the more numerous noxious insects eaten by the thrasher more than compensate for the useful beetles incidentally destroyed.

The vegetable food of this bird is nearly equally divided between fruit and a number of other substances, of which mast is the most prominent. Wild fruit, the largest item in the vegetable portion (19.94 per cent), was eaten every month in varying quantities, the month of maximum consumption (45.69 per cent) being September; January and February, with dried-up fruit from the last summer's crop, stand next. Altogether about 30 species of wild fruits or berries were identified in the stomachs. Those most eaten are blueberries, huckleberries, holly berries, elderberries, pokeberries, hackberries, Virginia creeper, and sour gum. Some seeds not properly classified as "fruit" were found, as bayberry, sumac—including some of the poisonous species—pine, and sweet gum.

Domestic fruit, or what was called such, was found in nine months, from April to the end of the year, most of it (53.19 per cent) in July. Raspberries or blackberries, currants, grapes, cherries, and strawberries were positively identified by their seeds, but as all of these grow wild, it is probable that much that is conventionally termed domestic fruit is really from uncultivated plants. The aggregate for the year is 12.42 per cent. Most unexpected in the thrasher's diet was mast, principally acorns, although some of it was so finely ground up that it was not possible to tell its exact nature. It is also somewhat a matter of doubt as to just where to draw a dividing line between mast and seeds, so that the proportion of each is somewhat uncertain. In the case in hand the total for the year is estimated at 23.72 per cent. Mast was eaten every month except August, but mostly in fall and winter—November, the month

when acorns are abundant and fresh, showing the greatest quantity (57.4 per cent).

Grain (2.57 per cent) was found in the stomachs for six months, but in only February, March, and May were there noteworthy percentages. March shows 12.37 per cent, the other two slightly less. The grain was nearly all corn, with a little wheat, but from the season in which it was taken most of it evidently was waste.

The farmer has nothing to fear from depredations on fruit or grain by the brown thrasher. The bird is a resident of groves and swamps rather than of orchards and gardens, so that it comes but little into contact with the products of husbandry, and does not prey upon them extensively when it does. The useful insects that it eats are amply paid for by its destruction of noxious ones.—*F. E. B. L., in Farmers' Bulletin.*



THE BROWN THRASHER



DARTING about in the thickets,
His red-brown coat to veil,
Foraging there amongst dead leaves,
Thrashing his long brown tail;
Perching aloft in the treetops,
Where all may hear and see,
Carols the bright brown thrasher,
Long and melodiously.

"Listen, O listen! he's saying;
"Glisten, glisten, you brook!
The sweet warm showers have beguiled the flowers;
O look! dear children, look!
The golden sun is shining,
The earth is in gay array;
The world is rife with a wealth of life!
'Tis May, fair winsome May!"

—*A. E. B.*

THE GAME LAW



PROHIBITS the killing of wild birds other than the game birds enumerated below, except English sparrows, hawks, owls, crows and buzzards.

The open season on game birds is as follows: Wild turkey gobblers, from December 1st to April 1st; quail, November 1st to March 1st; doves, August 1st to March 1; swan, geese, brant, ducks, rails, coots, mud hens, sand pipers, woodcocks and curlews, September 1st to March 15th; snipe and plover, November 1st to May 1st.

The killing of wild turkey hens is at all times prohibited.

Prohibits any pitfalls, deadfalls, scaffold, cage, snare, trap, net, salt lick, baited hook or baited field, or any other similar device, or any drug, poisonous chemicals or explosives, for the purpose of injuring, capturing or killing any protected bird or animal; also prohibits hunting protected birds or animals between dark and daylight. Unlawful to kill or capture any song or insect destroying bird at any time.

Open season on deer, November 1st to January 1st, and prohibits killing of doe, or female deer, at all times.

Elk are protected for period of ten years.

Open season on squirrels from August 1st to the following January 1st and May 15th to June 15th.

Fixes the following limits for each person in one day: One deer, ten squirrels, two turkeys, and twenty-five game birds.

Prohibits the sale or offering for sale of protected game birds or animals.

Prohibits the shipping or carrying of game except openly and in the possession of those who have hunter's license, as required by law. Prohibits carriers from accepting game to be carried in any other way, either within the State or without the State. Prohibits absolutely the carrying or shipping of live game.

Makes it unlawful to hunt on the land of another without written permission, except when in company of owner or agent of said land.

JOHN H. WALLACE, JR.,
State Game and Fish Commissioner,
Montgomery, Ala.

THE BARN SWALLOW



SWALLOW, why homeward turn'd thy joyful wing?
—In a far land I heard the voice of spring;
I found myself that moment on the way;
My wings, my wings, they had not power to stay.

LENGTH, about 7 inches. Distinguished among our swallows by deeply forked tail. Range: Breeds throughout the United States (except the South Atlantic and Gulf States) and most of Canada; winters in South America.

Habits and economic status: This is one of the most familiar birds of the farm and one of the greatest insect destroyers. From daylight to dark on tireless wings it seeks its prey, and the insects destroyed are countless. Its favorite nesting site is a barn rafter, upon which it sticks its mud basket. Most modern barns are so tightly constructed that swallows can not gain entrance, and in New England and some other parts of the country barn swallows are much less numerous than formerly. Farmers can easily provide for the entrance and exit of the birds and so add materially to their numbers. It may be well to add that the parasites that sometimes infest the nests of swallows are not the ones the careful housewife dreads, and no fear need be felt of the infestation spreading to the house. Insects taken on the wing constitute the almost exclusive diet of the barn swallow. More than one-third of the whole consists of flies, including unfortunately some useful parasitic species. Beetles stand next in order and consist of a few weevils and many of the small dung beetles of the May beetle family that swarm over the pastures in the late afternoon. Ants amount to more than one-fifth of the whole food, while wasps and bees are well represented.—*Biological Survey Bulletin.*



BARN SWALLOW.
 $\frac{7}{8}$ Life-size.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH



"WHERE'S your kingdom, little king?
Where's the land you call your own?
Where's your palace and your throne?
Fluttering lightly on the wing
Through the blossom world of May."

"Never a king by right divine,
Ruled a richer realm than mine;
What are these to song and wings?
Everywhere that I can fly,
There I own the earth and sky;
Everywhere that I can sing,
There I'm happy as a king."

WHY should we save and care for the birds? We should care for the birds because they are such a blessing to us. Our girls and boys should build little bird houses in shade trees around the house and the barn. Trees may be pruned to make inviting homes for the birds. You may think this work is unprofitable, but they will more than pay for care, by the good work they do in ridding the barn of flies, gnats, and mosquitoes.

There is a distressing amount of ignorance among us all concerning the birds. We live among them all our lives and know them not, by whistle, song, or feather. We should learn to know them as we do other familiar things. They are worth millions of dollars to us, but still we ignore them.

Severe winters, when the snow covers the weed tops, and a coating of ice covers the trees, so they cannot get seeds nor grubs, do not let the cats eat them, but feed them.

Birds are man's friend and man should be the birds' friend.

Think of their graceful movements and their beautiful songs. Listen to the mockingbird and to the song sparrow. When we see them flit in and out, giving us a glimpse of their pretty coats, the day is brighter than that day is without the songs of birds.

The mockingbird is the great vocalist in the South. By many people it is considered to be the best singer in America. It sings,

from morning 'till night, sweet songs that will keep us cheerful and happy.

The Kentucky cardinal, beautiful of plumage, amiable in disposition, and a brilliant whistler, cheers us in our day's work.

Aside from these services, the greatest work of birds is to destroy insects, and rid the fields of weed seeds.

Some of the insectivorous birds are the warblers, whippoorwills, swallows, chickadees, and flycatchers.

Think of the cotton saved to the planter by the birds destroying the young of the boll weevil. A single boll weevil multiplying in one year amounts to hundreds of thousands. At this rate our farmers would be unprofitable to try to farm; but why do not the farmers think of the work that the birds do for them? Without the birds, the farmers would have no occupation.

Birds rid the trees of insects that would destroy them, and cause great loss to us. But what birds drive away insects? Even the crows that you dislike, are good, farmers, for your crops. You call the birds thieves but your fields would be badly ruined without them.

When a farmer gathers a good crop of cotton, corn, or other things, he takes the credit to himself and says, "I made a good crop." Poor birds do not get any credit for their good work. Instead of saying, "I made a good crop," say, "The birds and I made a good crop."

After the great task the birds render to us, you wish to kill them. Why? Just because they take a few grains or a few cherries or berries; and all the time the birds are working for us. Would you rather hear the whir of insects than the songs of birds? If not, protect them? And you kill them for millinery purposes. Do not be so cruel as to kill the poor, innocent birds that do more, in some ways, to the farm than we can ourselves.

We should never wear a stuffed bird or even bird feathers that cannot be secured without taking their dear lives.

There is something so unselfish, so generous, and so uplifting in the song of a bird. They are God's ministering angels and their blessings fall on rich and poor alike. Do not kill the birds!

Do you know what you are doing, dear boys,
With a sling, gun, bow and arrow,
When you ruthlessly cripple the delicate wing
Of even a little brown sparrow?

Do you know the same God made the birds and you boys, and both for the very same reason.

Oh, children, drop the gun, the cruel stone,
O listen to my words,
And hear with me the little one's moan,
Have mercy on the birds!

Many of our most charming poets give us pictures, dear and tender, of these little friends of ours. Among these is Wordsworth in the "Skylark," and our much-beloved poet, Longfellow, gives a plea for protecting our birds as our best friends in, "The Birds of Killingworth." Listen what he says:

It was spring in Killingworth. Everything was putting on its gown of green. The little brook was singing happily as it would pass by some violets and say, "Wake up! Spring is here."

Some of the birds had come back from their long winter visit. They were as happy as could be singing and flitting all around.

"The robin and the bluebird piping loud,
Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee."

The birds thought the people would be glad to see them; but when the birds came the farmers were angry and tried to make plans to kill them.

The people called a town meeting in order to plan a good way to kill the birds. While the people were having the meeting, the birds peeped in to see who was there. On the platform sat the squire that lived in the white house; and there was the preacher with some lilies in his hand. Many farmers, too, were crowded in the meeting.

Poor birds; they listened how the men talked about them, and they thought the people were glad to see them.

"Ill fared it with the birds both great and small,
Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,
But enemies enough who every one,
Charged them with all the crimes under the sun."

But at the meeting the birds had one good friend. He was the school teacher. While the others were speaking of ways to kill the

birds, he sat sad, for he loved them. When they had finished, he stood and said:

"God sent them to comfort us. Think of
The thrush that carols at the dawn of day,
The oriole in the elm, the noisy jay,
The bluebird balanced on some topmost spray
Linnet and meadowlark and all the throng,
That dwell in nests and have the gift of song;
Think of your woods and orchards without birds,
Of empty nests that cling to bough and beams."

The farmers listened to the teacher, but they laughed and said, "We must kill the birds." Day by day the birds were killed. The cruel work went on until not a bird was left in Killingworth. "Now we shall have good crops," said the farmers; but when summer came the days were hot, the grass yellow. Hundreds of caterpillars, worms, and bugs ate the grain and vegetables. The trees were leafless. When the people walked near them, worms dropped on them. Then the farmers knew that because they had killed the birds, there would be no harvest. How sorry they felt, but the birds were dead.

One day in the next spring a strange sight was seen in Killingworth. This is what the people saw:

"A wagon overarched in evergreen,
Upon whose boughs wicker cages hung,
All full of singing birds."

The wagon was taken to the square of the city. Then the doors of the cages were opened and the birds flew out. There was never a song of a bird sung sweeter than those sung in Killingworth that summer.

What do you think of the people of Killingworth? Do you see by their selfish first thoughts, what trouble they brought upon themselves. Let us care for our birds? Some say, "Kill the birds; they are useless," but I say protect the birds, and make the conditions for their increase favorable. "As little messengers of good cheer, as exponents of grace, song and living beauty, as examples of parental love, they help to brighten and uplift our lives."—*Willie Reed Marsh*.

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